

“Sometimes It’s Hard Here to Call Someone to Ask for Help”: Social Capital in a Refugee
Community in Portland, Maine

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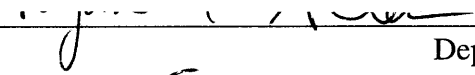
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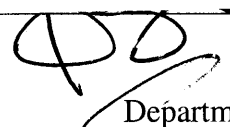
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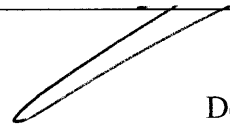
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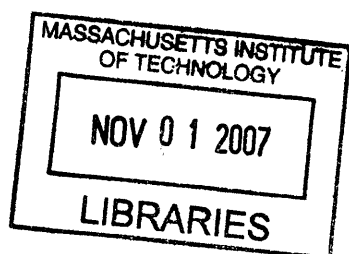
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ROTCH

Abstract

Though they represent a small proportion of the total immigrant population in the U.S., refugees play a significant role in many cities and towns that have recently received substantial numbers of refugees but have little experience with immigrants. Despite their access to temporary resettlement services funded by the federal government, refugees experience constant and intense needs that are rarely fulfilled by formal assistance alone. Since most refugees lack strong social networks, they typically rebuild their social networks and use them for informal support after they arrive in the U.S. Because refugees are such extreme cases, I argue that focusing on their experiences offers important insights into how individuals create and use social capital, and what effect it has on various outcomes in their lives.

This dissertation uses a mixed-methods approach to examine three distinct facets of social capital in the lives of refugees living in a non-gateway city. Multiple regression models reveal that social capital can affect earnings positively for male refugees, but negatively for female refugees. The different ways that male and female refugees experience social norms and reciprocal obligations that accompany social capital help to explain these divergent outcomes. When choosing which social ties to ask for assistance, interviews with Somali and Sudanese refugees indicate that, in addition to considering their self-interest, refugees also seek to maintain a dignified self. Further, refugees use social status and justifications for why they need assistance to help determine whom they ask for help. Finally, as “incubators” of social capital, religious institutions can play an important role in the lives of refugees. Evidence from interviews and participant observation at multiple religious institutions suggests that, in a non-gateway context, the functions of religious institutions differ for refugees from majority and minority religious traditions. I found that Catholic refugees use their church for bonding and bridging purposes, while Muslim refugees use their mosque primarily for bonding purposes. What role a religious institution plays in the life of a refugee is directly related to the interaction between context, and the socio-economic status and religious affiliation of refugees.

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I dedicate this dissertation to the 30 million refugees, internally displaced persons, and asylum seekers in the world today.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the liberalization of U.S. immigration policy in 1965, new immigrants have become increasingly important to the U.S. Immigrants arriving in the U.S. between 1970 and 2005 increased the proportion of the foreign born in the U.S. population from less than five percent to over 12 percent. In some key cities, like New York and Los Angeles, about 40 percent of the residents are foreign born (Singer 2007). At the same time, smaller cities, suburbs and rural areas that have little experience with the foreign born have recently found themselves awash in immigrants who are attracted to economic opportunities or placed there through refugee resettlement programs (Singer 2004; Singer and Wilson 2006). Since immigrants to the U.S. tend to be younger and more likely to work than the native born population, these demographic shifts have had a profound effect on the U.S. labor force. In 2005, almost 15 percent of the labor force was foreign born and, between 2000 and 2005, immigrants accounted for 60 percent of the growth in the labor force (Lowell, Gelatt and Batalova 2006). In fact, without the arrival of recent immigrants in the U.S. labor market during the 1990s, the labor forces of some regions in the U.S. would have contracted instead of expanded (Sum, Fogg and Harrington 2002).

The increased importance of immigrants in the U.S. has been matched by the intensity of public policy debates surrounding the issue. Despite strong evidence that immigrants improve the U.S. economy without significant harm to the economic standing of native born workers (Smith and Edmonston 1997), public policy debates rage from town meetings all the way to the U.S. Congress over the economic impact of immigrants on the native born. Additional debates center on what to do about the country's estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants and how policy makers should change U.S. immigration policy. For example, recently proposed and heavily contested legislation in the U.S. Senate would fundamentally shift the course of

American immigration policy from one that emphasizes family reunification to one that places a premium on skills and education (Pear and Rutenberg 2007).

In most of these debates, refugees, or immigrants who come to the U.S. because they have experienced persecution or the real threat of persecution in their countries of origin, have been consistently omitted. At least part of this neglect stems from the fact that refugees comprise a relatively small percentage of total immigrants in the U.S. For example, in the past 20 years, refugees represented approximately 10 percent of all immigrants admitted to the country and, overall, refugees make up only about seven percent of the total foreign born population (Singer and Wilson 2006). The lack of attention to refugees in public policy debates has extended into academic research, with few recent researchers actively studying the experiences of refugees and how these experiences differ from those of other immigrants.

This oversight is unfortunate since studying refugees can help us understand a small but important subset of immigrants. The power of studying refugees comes from two characteristics that make refugees conceptually distinct from other immigrants. First, in contrast to other immigrants who come to the U.S. for economic advancement, educational purposes, or family reunification, refugees come to the U.S. because they are fleeing persecution (Lundquist and Massey 2005). Additionally, the refugee resettlement system in the U.S. randomly places many refugees in a set of selected resettlement cities. In other words, a refugee's motivations for coming to the U.S. and his resettlement location are often determined exogenously, making refugee populations potentially good candidates for quasi-experimental research designs. Second, the conflicts that create refugees also frequently leave them without a strong social support network common to many other immigrants in the U.S. Because they face persistent and crucial needs when they arrive in the U.S., refugees usually rebuild and use their social networks

to help them meet their needs informally, throwing the somewhat abstract idea of “community building” into stark relief. These characteristics of refugees, combined with the fact that as a group recent refugees are woefully under researched, make them a compelling and critical case to study (King, Keohane and Verba 1994).

A refugee’s trip to the U.S. represents an extreme transition from a familiar environment that is hostile and capricious to a foreign environment that is, by comparison, safe and stable. Understandably, most refugees welcome this transition but find their new homes bewildering and need assistance in adapting to them. Temporary assistance funded by the federal government and supplied by non-profit service providers partially explains how refugees adapt to their new environments. Since 1980, refugees resettled in the U.S. receive temporary cash assistance, job search assistance, help finding a home, medical care, English lessons, and a variety of other services. In addition to these temporary services, refugees use social capital from reconstructed social networks to help them adapt. Most researchers define social capital as the collection of benefits or resources belonging to a network of individuals (Lin 2001b). An individual can “activate” a member of his social network to access benefits ranging from those that have an effect on survival, like emotional support or adequate nutrition during times of need, to forms of assistance that have an effect on mobility, like help finding a better job or higher quality housing. Institutions, like houses of worship or social clubs, play an important role as locations where individuals create and use social capital. Potentially, these institutions have bonding functions that reinforce group boundaries, in addition to bridging functions that can transcend group boundaries (Bankston and Zhou 2000). Studying the resettlement experiences of refugees offers a powerful window into the complexities of how refugees create and use social capital, as well as the effect it has on their lives.

Most prior research on social capital attempts to make a causal argument about how social capital affects various important outcomes, like economic gains. As a multifaceted concept, a nuanced understanding of social capital requires examining how individuals create and use it, in addition to how it affects outcomes. After all, the type and size of the effect that social capital has on outcomes may depend upon an individual's ability to create social capital and decisions about how to use it. This dissertation, which consists of three independent but related papers, uses quantitative and qualitative data to investigate how refugees create and use social capital, as well as how social capital affects outcomes in their lives. More specifically, the papers focus on the effect of social capital on refugee labor market outcomes; the relationships among and between refugees and others that create the foundation for social capital; and community institutions that act as sites for the creation and use of social capital.

Portland, Maine

Most refugees resettle in typical immigrant gateways that have large numbers of immigrants already, but increasingly refugees also resettle in smaller cities and rural areas that have little experience with immigrants of any kind (Singer and Wilson 2006). To increase our understanding of refugees and their use of social capital in these new contexts, each paper in this dissertation focuses on refugees living in Portland, Maine, a city that has received a large number of recent refugees who dominate the increasingly important foreign born population there. More than a backdrop where refugee resettlement happens, Portland as a location affects refugee resettlement outcomes. The social and economic contexts of Portland and how it connects to the global economy help to determine how easily refugees adjust when they arrive there (Levitt and Schiller 2004; Sassen 1999).

Despite a past that was relatively rich in diversity, Maine is currently one of the most racially and ethnically homogenous states in the U.S. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, an abundance of French-speaking immigrants from Canada moved to Maine to support the natural resource and manufacturing industries there and take advantage of related economic opportunities. The arrival of these immigrants resulted in a large proportion of foreign born residents in Maine's population. In fact, in 1910 one in seven Maine residents were foreign born (Cervone 2006). However, by 2005 Census data reveal that the proportion of foreign born in Maine's population had declined to only three percent (compared to about 12 percent nationally). In addition to an overwhelmingly native born population, most Mainers are white. In 1990 over 98 percent of Maine's population was white and by 2005 that proportion had shrunk only modestly to about 97 percent. In comparison, over the same period of time the proportion of whites in the U.S. declined from about 80 percent to about 75 percent. Finally, in 2000 Maine had the highest median age of any state in the U.S. Since it lacks the diversity and youth that increasingly drive population growth in the U.S. (Frey 2006), Maine's population has grown slowly, increasing by less than five percent between 1990 and 2005 compared to about 16 percent nationally over the same period.

Historically, Maine's economy has been tied to natural resource extraction (including logging and fishing) and manufacturing, but increased international economic competition has resulted in significant changes to its economy. In 1969 about one third of all jobs in Maine were in manufacturing, while jobs linked to natural resources or the textiles-apparel-shoe industries comprised another 25 percent (Colgan and Barringer 2007). Over time, the pressures of international economic competition ravaged these industries. By 2004 only 10 percent of Maine jobs were in manufacturing, while six percent were attached to natural resources and jobs in the

textiles-apparel-shoes industries had nearly disappeared (Colgan and Barringer 2007). An analysis of employment data from 2006 indicates that, like much of the rest of the U.S., service industries now dominate the Maine economy. In fact, Table 1 shows that over 80 percent of the private sector jobs in Maine are in the service-sector. Together with Maine's homogenous and slow-growing population, the effects of globalization have helped to make Maine one of the poorest states in New England. For example, Maine has the lowest per capita income in New England and consistently lags behind the rest of the region on economic health indicators such as job growth.

Table 1: Industry Employment and Associated Earnings in 2006 for Maine Residents in the Portland Metropolitan Area and the State of Maine

Industry	Portland Metro Area			Maine		
	Employment	% of Total Employment	Avg Monthly Earnings	Employment	% of Total Employment	Avg Monthly Earnings
All	244,044	100.0%	\$3,034	573,066	100.0%	\$2,824
Agriculture	456	0.2%	\$2,304	4,964	0.9%	\$2,340
Mining	54	0.0%	\$3,041	114	0.0%	\$2,748
Utilities	1,291	0.5%	\$4,270	3,084	0.5%	\$3,914
Construction	13,591	5.6%	\$3,244	30,684	5.4%	\$3,037
Manufacturing	26,817	11.0%	\$3,927	61,143	10.7%	\$3,605
Wholesale Trade	10,896	4.5%	\$4,276	21,792	3.8%	\$3,887
Retail Trade	35,987	14.7%	\$2,160	84,260	14.7%	\$2,052
Transportation and Warehousing	6,628	2.7%	\$2,999	15,600	2.7%	\$2,796
Information	5,953	2.4%	\$3,764	11,911	2.1%	\$3,313
Finance and Insurance	10,840	4.4%	\$4,334	25,657	4.5%	\$3,966
Real Estate	4,079	1.7%	\$2,704	7,374	1.3%	\$2,487
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	12,510	5.1%	\$4,432	23,967	4.2%	\$3,978
Management of Companies or Enterprises	3,234	1.3%	\$2,928	6,416	1.1%	\$3,189
Administrative and Support Services	11,192	4.6%	\$2,574	23,157	4.0%	\$2,336
Educational Services	22,838	9.4%	\$2,879	61,875	10.8%	\$2,778
Health Care and Social Assistance	39,319	16.1%	\$3,072	96,741	16.9%	\$2,873
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	4,140	1.7%	\$2,182	8,420	1.5%	\$2,097
Accommodation and Food Services	21,328	8.7%	\$1,417	45,301	7.9%	\$1,294
Other Services (except Public Administration)	7,343	3.0%	\$2,202	16,959	3.0%	\$2,157
Public Administration	5,548	2.3%	\$2,787	23,647	4.1%	\$2,952

Note: Author's calculations using data from the Maine Department of Labor for the second quarter of 2006.

In many ways, Portland, the largest city in Maine, plays a relatively minor role in the global economy. For example, Portland has a small population (64,000 residents in 2005) and hosts relatively few industrial clusters that are part of the increasingly important “knowledge economy.” However, Portland possesses a major economic asset that explains much of its economic success and intricately links it to the global economy. Since the 1600s, Portland’s natural deep water port has made it an attractive trading center. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in 2006 the Port of Portland was the 25th largest port in the U.S., but the largest tonnage port in New England and the largest oil port on the East Coast. The importance of fossil fuels for the energy policies of industrialized economies around the world makes Portland a key city in the U.S. and global economy. The movement of oil through the port has a multiplier effect that helps to support other businesses. For example, the City of Portland’s Ports and Transportation Department website lists almost 250 businesses attached to the Port, representing industries ranging from transportation to fishing to beer brewing. In addition, over 200,000 international passengers visit Portland each year from cruise ships that stop in Portland (Monroe 2004). Port officials estimate that the economic activity associated with the Port contributes half a billion dollars to the Maine economy each year (Monroe 2004), with much of this sum undoubtedly concentrated in the Portland metropolitan area economy.

Portland surpasses the rest of the state on virtually every economic measure, suggesting that economic opportunities are more plentiful there than anywhere else in the state. For example, the county that includes Portland leads the state in job growth and boasts a lower unemployment rate than the rest of the state (Cervone 2007; LMIS 2005). In fact, data from the Maine Department of Labor indicate that the average unemployment rate in Portland between 1998 and 2005 was 3.2 percent, more than one percentage point less than the average

unemployment rate in Maine over the same period. As Table 1 indicates, the proportional dispersion of jobs among major industries in Portland closely matches the dispersion in Maine overall. However, in almost every industry, earnings in Portland significantly outpace earnings in Maine.

Portland's demographic patterns represent significant departures from the prevailing conditions in the rest of the state. For example, about 91 percent of Portland's population is white and close to eight percent is foreign born, making it considerably more diverse than Maine overall. With a median age about three years less than the median age in Maine, Portland's population is also substantially younger than the state's population. According to the Census Bureau, a high in-migration rate to Maine between 2000 and 2005, anchored by the popularity of Portland and Southern Maine in general, has buoyed the stagnant population growth that has pervaded the state for most of the 20th century. Notably, the Census Bureau identified almost 12,000 people who migrated to Maine from the Boston area between 1999 and 2004. The well documented increase in the cost of housing in Boston during this time period (Heudorfer, Bluestone and Helmrich 2004) and the comparatively low cost of living in Portland and other parts of Maine probably contributed to this migration pattern. These demographic characteristics, along with increased concentration of economic activity around Portland's port area and vibrant downtown business district, have reinforced the importance of Portland's economy for the state and the region.

Along with the availability of affordable housing, an accessible public transportation system, and strong social services, the level of economic opportunity in a city is an important consideration for refugee resettlement organizations when they choose a location to resettle refugees. The presence of all of these factors in Portland prompted the National Conference of

Catholic Bishops, one of the eight refugee resettlement organizations in the U.S., to begin to resettle refugees there in the early 1980s. Though estimates of the number of refugees living in Portland vary, figures from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement show that almost four thousand refugees were resettled in Portland between 1983 and 2004. Recent evidence indicates that of the foreign born population arriving in Portland between 1990 and 2000, almost half came to the U.S. as a refugee (Singer and Wilson 2006). None of these figures reflect a significant population of secondary migrants, those refugees who originally resettled in a different city in the U.S. and then decided to move to Portland. Resettlement officials in Portland estimate that the recent secondary migrant population in Portland contributes at least two thousand additional refugees to the total number recognized by official data. Therefore, refugees probably represent close to 10 percent of the 64,000 people living in Portland today.

The economic and social conditions in Portland could have a mixed effect on refugees living there. On one hand, Portland ranks high on many quality of life issues important to refugees, including low crime rates, good public schools, and decent public housing. On the other hand, Portland is still homogeneous compared to most other cities in the U.S. This homogeneity prompts questions about how much experience social service providers and the native born residents have with diversity, and ultimately what kind of reception refugees experience when they arrive there. For example, Somali refugees living in Lewiston, a city about 35 miles North of Portland, have experienced a cold reception that has been punctuated by hostile incidents (Jones 2004). While no similarly hostile incidents in Portland have been reported in local media outlets, questions linger concerning how well the native born population has received the refugees resettling there.

In addition, Portland's economy may be healthier than the rest of Maine, but the economic opportunities there for low skilled workers, the category that best describes most refugees, are still limited compared to the opportunities found in many other cities across the U.S. Since many low-skilled jobs in Portland, including much of the accommodation and retail industries, are connected to tourism, a large proportion of the job opportunities available to refugees are seasonal. Though the majority of the future job openings in Maine will require only short or medium-term on-the-job-training, these same jobs are associated with low average earnings (LMIS 2006). In other words, refugees may find employment in Portland, but many of the jobs available to them now and in the future pay only modest wages. With these factors in mind, the next section gives a preview of research findings from the papers in the dissertation.

Research Findings

The first paper in this dissertation examines the role of co-ethnic social capital on the earnings of refugees, using a unique dataset that includes demographic, human capital, social capital, work experience, and earnings data for adult refugees who resettled in Portland, Maine between 1998 and 2004. Multiple regression models test the effect of access to co-ethnic social capital upon arrival to Portland on the log earnings of refugees in their first and most recent years of work. Results show that access to co-ethnic social capital upon arrival can provide important benefits or burdens and that the effects vary by gender. Female refugees who had access to co-ethnic social capital upon arrival earned less in their most recent year of work than those without access to co-ethnic social capital. In contrast, male refugees who had access to co-ethnic social capital upon arrival earned more in their most recent year of work than male refugees without access to co-ethnic social capital. The different ways that male and female refugees experience

social norms and reciprocal obligations that accompany social capital help to explain these divergent outcomes. The paper outlines possible causal mechanisms; the implications of the findings for policy and social capital research; and additional research that could shed light on why co-ethnic social capital effects male and female refugees differently.

The second paper uses evidence from 42 individual interviews to examine the mental model that refugees use when activating social ties. As individuals who have fled persecution, refugees arrive in the U.S. with few resources, but urgent and persistent needs. Compared to many native born individuals in the U.S., the desperate situation that refugees face makes their choices regarding social tie activation easier to identify and isolate. I found that in addition to considering their self-interest when activating social ties, refugees also seek to maintain a dignified self. They achieve this by following different social tie activation paths to access monetary and non-monetary resources, since these types of resources carry with them different levels of stigma. In addition, refugees use social status and justifications for why they need assistance to help determine whom they ask for help. At a theoretical level, these findings suggest that human exchange is socially complicated and that insights from rational choice theory, social psychology, and cultural sociology have roles to play in helping to explain it. In particular, social psychology and cultural sociology help us understand how factors inherent to social relationships shape the self-interested motivations at the heart of social tie activation decisions. More practically, service providers involved in refugee resettlement should acknowledge that social norms change refugee help seeking behavior in non-trivial ways and adjust the way they support refugees accordingly.

The third paper uses evidence from 42 individual interviews and participant observation at multiple religious institutions to investigate the functions of religious institutions in the lives

of refugees in a non-gateway area. As individuals who sometimes experience religious persecution and lack informal sources of support, religious institutions may play a particularly important role for refugees in the U.S. However, in a context dominated by Christian religious traditions, the functions of religious institutions may differ for refugees from majority and minority religious traditions. This may be particularly true for Muslims who have been subject to increased suspicion since the September 11th terrorist attacks in the U.S. I found that in a non-gateway area Catholic refugees use their church for bonding and/or bridging purposes, while Muslim refugees use their mosque primarily for bonding purposes. Notably, the Catholic refugees that used their church for bonding and bridging purposes attended two different services in the same church, suggesting that it may be difficult for one service to adequately serve both purposes. The contribution of this research is to point out the importance of the interaction between context, and the socio-economic status and religious affiliation of immigrants in helping to determine the role of religious institutions in their lives. Service providers involved in refugee resettlement should acknowledge that, unlike refugees from majority religious traditions, refugees from minority religious traditions may have more difficulty relying on their religious institutions to help them get ahead.

Some argue that refugees represent such a special case that any research findings from studies focused on refugees will not have a broader application to other populations. I believe that, while they are extreme cases, the experiences of refugees mirror the experiences of many other poor populations in the U.S. For example, refugees move between societies with widely varying social and cultural environments in a short amount of time with limited formal assistance from the state and limited personal resources. This experience has clear conceptual links to the experiences of other resource poor populations who undergo similar transitions. One particularly

good example is the federally sponsored Moving to Opportunity (MTO) program, which moves public housing residents from public housing in high poverty neighborhoods to housing in low poverty neighborhoods (Goering and Feins 2003). Like the experiences of refugees, this transition involves moving in a short amount of time between segments of society with different cultural environments with the help of government resources that are limited in time and scope. With the conceptual similarities between refugees and other poor populations in mind, I believe that findings from this study can be suggestive for a wider range of populations.

Chapter 2: Benefit, Burden or Both? The Effect of Co-Ethnic Social Capital on the Earnings of Refugees

Introduction

Existing research on the importance of co-ethnic social capital suggests that it helps to shape a variety of social and economic outcomes for individuals (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Stack 1974). Still, there is lingering debate over whether co-ethnic social capital has a positive or negative effect on labor market outcomes, particularly for low-skill, low-wage immigrant workers (Sanders, Nee and Sernau 2002; Tsuda, Valdez and Cornelius 2003). This debate has mostly focused on economic immigrants instead of refugees, or immigrants who resettle in a receiving country after leaving their countries of origin because of persecution (Black 2001).

Since refugees arrive in the U.S. with few material resources, government assistance that is limited in time, and ambitious expectations regarding their ability to become economically self-sufficient, understanding how co-ethnic social capital shapes refugee economic adaptation is vital (Haines 1996). Access to co-ethnic social capital could give refugees much needed information regarding available jobs and the support necessary to work in one of these jobs, producing positive outcomes (Gold 1992). At the same time, access to co-ethnic social capital that helps refugees find employment could also constrain their labor market activity because of reciprocal obligations and adherence to social norms that accompany the use of social capital (Bach and Carroll-Seguin 1986; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Read 2004).

Two changes in the admission and resettlement patterns of refugees in the U.S. compound the importance of understanding the effect of co-ethnic social capital on the economic outcomes of refugees. First, the diversification of refugees resettling in the U.S. may mean that

existing research on refugees in the U.S. is less applicable to the current situation. In the early 1980s most refugees in the U.S. came from Southeast Asia, but currently 38 percent come from a country in Africa and 40 percent come from the former Soviet Union or Eastern Europe (ORR 2004). Second, compared to the early years of the refugee resettlement program in the U.S., refugees are now more likely to resettle in small cities and even rural areas that have less experience with refugees specifically and diversity in general (Fennelly and Leitner 2002; Singer and Wilson 2006). With different economic conditions and institutional environments present in smaller cities and rural areas compared to large cities in the U.S., it stands to reason that refugees in these areas may have experiences that differ significantly (Hein 2006). These factors make the role of co-ethnic social capital on the economic adaptation of refugees living in small cities an important topic to consider.

In response to this need, this paper focuses on how demographic, and human and social capital factors affect the earnings of refugees living in a small U.S. city. It responds to the research question, does access to co-ethnic social capital upon arrival in the city of resettlement give refugees an advantage in the labor market compared to those who do not have access to co-ethnic social capital upon arrival? This research answers this question through an analysis of the effect of sponsorship, a measure of access to co-ethnic social capital, on the earnings of a diverse group of adult refugees that arrived in Portland, Maine between 1998 and 2004. Research results suggest that the effect of co-ethnic sponsorship on refugee earnings is different for male and female refugees over time. Specifically, co-ethnic sponsorship has no effect on the initial earnings of female and male refugees, but over time a negative effect on the earnings of female refugees and a positive effect on the earnings of male refugees.

This research uses three innovations to add to existing knowledge about refugee economic outcomes. First, it takes advantage of sponsorship status, a unique measure of a refugee's access to co-ethnic social capital in the resettlement city. Second, it focuses on a diverse set of recently arrived refugees, helping to shed light on differences in experiences of refugee groups that are relatively new to the U.S. and have not received nearly the amount of scrutiny of refugees who arrived in the 1980s. And third, it focuses on the outcomes of refugees in a small city, a context that is becoming increasingly important for refugee resettlement and is woefully under-researched.

This paper proceeds in five sections. The first section explores relevant prior scholarship on this topic and places this current study within the context of this work. The second section describes the data used in this analysis, as well as an overview of the demographic characteristics and economic conditions in Portland, Maine and the State of Maine. The third section describes the methodology used to test the relationship between access to co-ethnic social capital and refugee earnings. The fourth section presents results from the research. Finally, the fifth section identifies research findings, uses qualitative data collected by the author to help explain the findings, and discusses their theoretical and practical implications.

The Importance of Social Capital on the Economic Adaptation of Refugees

Researchers from multiple disciplines argue that social capital helps to explain important social and economic processes. In defining social capital, one group of scholars stresses the importance of social structures and how these structures enable individual action (Briggs 1998; Coleman 1988; Lin 2001a; Portes 1998). In contrast, other researchers have stretched the definition of the term social capital to include an application for larger political structures, such

as cities and nations (Newton 2001; Putnam 1993; Woolcock 1998). Perhaps the most powerful definition of social capital comes from Pierre Bourdieu, who defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (Bourdieu 1985: 248). In other words, social capital is a collection of benefits belonging to a network of individuals. Given this definition, co-ethnic social capital is the social capital generated in networks of co-ethnics all living in the same geographic area (a co-ethnic community).

For the most part, researchers have treated social capital as an unambiguously positive source of support. However, since reciprocity helps to define the concept of social capital, it is reasonable to believe that membership in a group and the social capital that comes with this membership may have a downside in addition to benefits (Menjivar 2000; Portes and Landolt 1996). In addition, prior research indicates that poor people’s social networks can serve as an important source of resiliency and aid, but that these resources can be limited because social ties in the network are themselves very needy (Stack 1974). As a result, many poor people who need help from their social networks also frequently find themselves under obligation to those in their social networks who need their assistance. Therefore, a more robust understanding of social capital must pay attention to the obligations and claims on resources, or what an individual owes to other members of a social network, in addition to the aid that an individual receives from other members of a social network.

Social Capital and Economic Activity

Researchers have used the concept of social capital extensively to explain outcomes in economic activity. One of the most prominent examples is the use of social ties in an informal

way to access information about economic opportunities. For example, labor economists have long suggested that job search strategies that rely on information about available jobs from social ties are a popular strategy used by individuals to find employment (Rees 1966). Job search efficiency and the quality of jobs found through a search vary according to the different kinds of social ties used. In particular, “strong” ties (close friends) may produce less successful job searches, compared to “weak” ties (acquaintances), since weak ties are better sources of non-redundant information and therefore more helpful at identifying higher quality employment (Burt 1992; Granovetter 1974).

The immigration literature uses social capital to explain various economic activities including employment patterns and the effect of these patterns on immigrant earnings. In the traditional understanding of immigrant assimilation, immigrants took jobs in industries that were characterized by instability, no reward for human capital investments, and low wages (the secondary labor market) when they first entered the country (Gordon 1964; Piore 1979). More recently, researchers have argued that immigrants use co-ethnic social capital to form special employment arrangements called ethnic enclaves and ethnic niches where individuals of a particular ethnicity or country of origin predominate (Model 1993; Portes and Jensen 1989; Sanders and Nee 1992; Waldinger 1994; Wilson and Portes 1980; Zhou 1992). However, there is substantial disagreement about the extent to which immigrants benefit from these working arrangements. (Edin, Fredriksson and Aslund 2003; Enchautegui 2002; Fong and Ooka 2002; Model 1993; Portes and Jensen 1987; Sanders 2002).

Despite previous findings regarding the importance of weak ties for finding employment, some studies of job search by immigrants have shown that strong ties can play an important “vouching” role for individuals looking for work, particularly for those with lower levels of

human capital (Green, Tigges and Brown 1995). However, depending upon the industries and occupations where an immigrant's strong ties are employed, relying on strong ties can lead to dead end jobs with little promise of economic mobility (Green, Tigges and Diaz 1999). Context can also play an important role in the usefulness of social capital: social capital may be less helpful in societies with a long history of immigration and developed immigrant labor market, but very important in societies where immigration is relatively newer and immigrant labor markets are less developed (Tsuda, Valdez and Cornelius 2003).

Conceptual and Practical Differences between Immigrants and Refugees

With the notable exception of immigrants admitted from Communist countries after World War II, the U.S. has historically failed to make a distinction between economic immigrants and refugees. Instead, the U.S. admitted all immigrants within the same quota system until 1980 (Holman 1996; ORR 2002). Since the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980, which formalized the refugee resettlement program in the U.S. and authorized a separate admission process for immigrants classified as refugees, almost two million refugees have been admitted into the U.S. (ORR 2004).

This lack of distinction has carried over into immigrant research. Despite the fact that economic immigrants and refugees have arrived in the U.S. under different categories of admission for over 25 years, much of the research concerning immigrant economic adaptation fails to distinguish between economic immigrants and refugees. This is unfortunate since conceptual and practical differences between the two groups suggest that researchers should examine them separately. For example, most economic immigrants voluntarily leave their countries of origin in search of economic opportunity, while refugees leave their countries of

origin out of a well-founded fear of persecution (Joly 2002; Kunz 1981; Lundquist and Massey 2005). Given the nature of their departure, it is less likely that refugees will ever return to their countries of origin compared to economic immigrants. Thus, refugees make decisions with a different time horizon compared to economic immigrants, resulting in increased investment in human capital and better economic outcomes for refugees compared to economic immigrants (Cortes 2004; Duleep and Regets 1999). Because of their often fragmented social networks of refugees in the receiving country, refugees usually have to recreate family and community social ties in a way that economic immigrants do not (Haines 1996; McMichael and Manderson 2004; Shelley 2001).

More practically, but related to these conceptual differences, refugees are less likely to have material possessions or to have prepared to arrive in the U.S. to the same extent as immigrants (Haines 1996). Finally, refugees have a unique legal relationship with the state that further sets them apart from other immigrants. This relationship with the state allows them to access a variety of services that are generally unavailable to other immigrants (Hein 1993; Zimmermann and Tumlin 1999).

Economic Activity of Refugees

Originally, scholars focused on refugee economic adaptation because of the large numbers of refugees arriving in the U.S. and unease among politicians that refugees would become a burden on state welfare systems (Gold 1992; Haines 1996; Kennedy 1981). In fact, political concerns were only thinly veiled in the 1980 Refugee Act, which explicitly states that employable refugees should be placed in jobs as soon as possible. Given this policy stance, a substantial portion of the existing research on refugees in the U.S. has focused on refugee labor

force participation, rather than longer term outcomes, such as earnings over time (Bach and Carroll-Seguin 1986; Strand 1984).

Studies that focus on the employment status and earnings of refugees have found that English language skills are an important determinant of employment status, but differ in whether education-level upon arrival, gender, and age are important predictors (Chiswick 1993; Cortes 2004; Mamgain and Collins 2003; Strand 1984; Waxman 2001). Some analyses have demonstrated that refugees start at a distinct disadvantage compared to economic migrants, but achieve parity in the probability of employment over time (Wooden 1991). Very few studies have focused on both refugee employment status and earnings as dependent variables in the same study, and those that have measured earnings in unreliable ways (Potocky-Tripodi 2003).

In the past, research relied mostly on human capital to explain refugee economic outcomes, instead of giving more equal consideration to how social capital contributed to these outcomes. Studies from Canada and the U.S. that considered social capital as an independent variable found that it had little effect on economic outcomes. For example, Montgomery (1996) estimated the effect of involvement in an ethnic social network on economic adaptation for refugees in Canada, after controlling for typical demographic characteristics. His results failed to support the idea that participation in an ethnic network had any influence on economic adaptation, though these results should be viewed with caution given the non-random sample used in the analysis. Similarly, Potocky-Tripodi (2004) tested whether or not assistance of a social network helped refugees find employment and what effect this assistance had on earnings after controlling for background characteristics. She found that assistance from a social network has a small, positive, and statistically significant effect on employment status, but no significant effect on earnings. In contrast, other studies have found that the use of social capital has a

positive effect on the economic adaptation of refugees. For example, in a study of recent refugees in Canada, Lamba (2003) found that refugees who actively used co-ethnic social capital to help them find a job were significantly more likely to have higher quality employment compared to refugees who relied exclusively on their own efforts to find a job.

The divergent findings of these studies are probably due to how each researcher measured social capital. For example, Montgomery measured social capital as the extent of an individual's involvement in an ethnic social network, rather than whether or not an individual used his ethnic social network for assistance in the labor market. Potocky-Tripodi measured social capital by whether or not an individual used friends, family members, or compatriots to help him find his first job in the U.S. and used this dichotomous variable to estimate current monthly earnings, despite the fact that 98 percent of the sample had lived in the U.S. for longer than five years and had potentially worked in many jobs since their first entry point into the labor market. In contrast, Lamba measured social capital by how refugees found their current jobs and used this measure as an independent variable to estimate current job quality. Of the three approaches, Lamba's methods were likely to measure social capital and use it to estimate economic outcomes most effectively.

Some of the best studies that focus on the effect of social capital on the economic adaptation of refugees distinguish between co-ethnic social capital and social capital outside of the refugee group through refugee sponsorship status. Sponsorship was the original method of refugee resettlement in the U.S., with refugees receiving one of two types of sponsorship: family/co-ethnic sponsorship or sponsorship outside of the refugee community (Tran 1991). Sponsors traditionally shouldered much of the burden involved with early resettlement challenges, including helping the refugee locate housing and employment (Lanphier 1983).

Studies that examined this topic found that refugees with non-refugee sponsors fared better in economic adaptation than refugees with refugee sponsors (Bach and Carroll-Seguin 1986; Majka and Mullan 2002; Tran 1991). Based on data from a national survey of Southeast Asian refugees in the early 1980s, Bach and Carroll-Seguin found that female refugees who arrived after 1980 received a significant benefit to their labor force participation rate from having non-refugee sponsors, since sponsored female refugees may have been under pressure from an established refugee community to adhere to cultural norms and stay at home instead of work (1986). Analysis of the results from a national survey of Indochinese refugees in 1982 similarly found that refugees with non-refugee sponsorship experienced better economic adaptation than refugees with sponsorship from fellow refugees (Tran 1991). A third study focused on refugees from multiple countries of origin who resettled in Chicago and found that by the late 1980s male and female refugees who had access to mainstream sources of support experienced better economic adaptation outcomes than those who did not (Majka and Mullan 2002).

Findings from all three of these studies suggest that “weak” ties outside of the co-ethnic community provide an economic advantage for refugees. One interpretation of these studies is that networks of weak social ties allow refugees to access superior resources for attainment than networks of strong social ties. Another possible interpretation of these studies, perhaps most consistent with findings from Bach and Carroll-Seguin, is that the advantages provided by networks of strong, co-ethnic ties are offset by increased reciprocal obligations and adherence to community norms that may constrain involvement in the labor market. Other qualitative studies that focus on how immigrants use social capital support this latter interpretation. For example, a study of Salvadorans in San Francisco found that using co-ethnic social capital led to a variety of outcomes, some positive and others negative, and was experienced differently by male and

female immigrants (Menjivar 2000). Specifically, findings suggest that social capital may have different effects on the economic outcomes of male and female refugees, because of different expectations regarding reciprocal obligations for men and women, and community norms in place that regulate the behavior of men and women differently.

The Current Study

This study uses quantitative data to test whether access to co-ethnic social capital is a benefit or burden for refugees in the labor market. To measure access to co-ethnic social capital, this study uses sponsorship status, a measure that has been used by previous studies. However, there is a need to reassess the importance of sponsorship on refugee economic adaptation outcomes, because the notion of refugee sponsorship has changed since the 1980s. In the early years of the refugee resettlement program in the U.S. native born families, churches with non-Hispanic white congregations, and refugee resettlement organizations sponsored refugees in addition to refugee families (Montero 1979). Traditionally, voluntary agencies (VOLAGS), which are the non-profit organizations that the U.S. government funds to assist refugees during the resettlement process, matched refugees who came to the U.S. with a sponsor who would be responsible for many of the economic and social needs initially experienced by a refugee (Holman 1996).

The resettlement system today is different in two important ways. First, family-members or close friends of refugees sponsor the majority of refugees, while few native born families or churches sponsor any refugees. In the case of Portland, Maine, refugees without a co-ethnic sponsor do not have a sponsor at all and are considered non-sponsored. Second, non-profit

refugee resettlement organizations provide the majority of resettlement assistance for all refugees, regardless of sponsorship status.

In most cases, the initial assistance provided by the VOLAG is intensive and constant, regardless of whether the refugee is sponsored or not. At the same time, sponsored refugees also rely on their sponsors for assistance during resettlement. The non-profit refugee resettlement organization requests that a sponsor assist a refugee with tasks, such as offering transportation and looking for housing or a job. Sponsors are not required to provide any of this support, but many sponsors help refugees in numerous ways. In other words, sponsored refugees actually have two sources of support: their co-ethnic sponsor and a local refugee resettlement organization. Therefore, non-sponsored refugees may be missing an important source of social, and potentially economic, support (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). It remains to be seen if this additional support for sponsored refugees is an advantage for them in the labor market.

Ultimately, this paper tests three hypotheses regarding the effect of access to co-ethnic social capital on the earnings of resettled refugees. All rely on whether or not a refugee was sponsored as a proxy for access to co-ethnic social capital upon arrival. Since no consensus on the effect of co-ethnic social capital on refugee earnings has emerged from the literature, these hypotheses were developed based on the importance of strong social ties in finding a job and other findings that suggest different effects of co-ethnic social capital on outcomes for male and female refugees (Bach and Carroll-Seguin 1986; Green, Tigges and Brown 1995; Menjivar 2000; Portes and Rumbaut 2006).

Hypothesis 1: Sponsored male and female refugees will earn more in their first year of work than male and female refugees without access to co-ethnic social capital upon arrival.

Hypothesis 2: Over time, sponsored male refugees will earn more in their most recent year of work than male refugees without access to co-ethnic social capital upon arrival.

Hypothesis 3: Over time, sponsored female refugees will earn less in their most recent year of work than female refugees without access to co-ethnic social capital upon arrival.

The first hypothesis suggests that, regardless of gender, sponsorship will give refugees an initial advantage over those who are not sponsored. The next two hypotheses are consistent with the idea that male and female refugees experience social capital differently.

Data and Resettlement Context

The sample of refugees for this analysis came from the administrative files of Catholic Charities Maine Refugee and Immigrant services (CCMRIS) in Portland, Maine. While most states have several organizations that resettle refugees, CCMRIS is the only functioning refugee resettlement organization in the State of Maine. Those included in the sample are all refugee clients who used the services at CCMRIS between January 1, 1998 and December 31, 2004, and were at least 18 years old as of September 1, 2005. Since the cultural contexts of a country of origin may influence how refugees use social capital in the U.S. the sample was limited to individuals from Eastern Europe (former Soviet Republics or the former Yugoslavia), Somalia, and the Sudan to create a more focused comparison.¹ There were 938 refugees who met these selection criteria. This included refugees who were resettled in Portland by CCMRIS as well as secondary migrants, those refugees who originally resettled in a U.S. city other than Portland and

¹ Small numbers of individuals from other countries in Africa, South America, and Asia were dropped from the analysis.

subsequently decided to move to Portland. Since secondary migrants move within the U.S. for reasons other than seeking safety, they may represent a hybrid immigrant group that resembles economic immigrants as well as refugees.

Employment and earnings data came from the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL). Each quarter, most employers in Maine submit a list of their employees along with the quarterly earnings of each employee to the Bureau of Unemployment Compensation's tax division. These individual-level data from this source span a time period between the first quarter of 1998 and the third quarter of 2005 (the last quarter of data available at the time of this analysis). These data do not include information about self-employment or informal employment, though available anecdotal evidence gathered by the author suggests that these forms of employment are not major sources of employment for refugees in Portland. These data indicate, for each quarter in this time period, whether a refugee worked in Maine (an employment occurrence), how many employment occurrences a refugee had in each quarter, the corresponding industry of each employment occurrence, and how much a refugee earned at each employment occurrence. Part-time or full-time work, and the number of hours worked, are not available from this data source. Connecting the data from CCMRIS and MDOL using the social security numbers of those in the sample yielded a dataset with rich demographic information on the adult refugee population in Portland, as well as a comprehensive work history in Maine for each adult refugee who worked in the state.

Dependent Variables

This study considers two dependent variables. The first dependent variable is the total, inflation-adjusted earnings of a refugee in his first year of working in Maine. This variable was

calculated by adding earnings from all of the jobs that a refugee held in Maine during the four quarters immediately following the first quarter of work in Maine. The second dependent variable is the total, inflation-adjusted earnings of a refugee in his most recent year of working in Maine. This variable was calculated by adding a refugee's earnings in his most recent quarter of work to his earnings in the previous three quarters. Both variables were calculated in constant 2005 dollars.

Independent Variables

Independent variables included in this study fall into one of five areas: demographic characteristics, human capital characteristics, macroeconomic factors, work experience, and access to social capital. Table 2 lists and defines the independent variables used in this analysis.

Table 2: List and definition of independent variables used in the analysis

Variable	Definition
Demographic	
Age	Refugee's age in years (September 1, 2005 minus refugee's date of birth)
Age_Sq	Refugee's age squared
Minor_ME	1=refugee was a minor upon arrival in Portland, 0=otherwise
Origin	Dummy variable for region of origin: Eastern Europe (omitted), Sudan, Somalia
Human Capital	
English	Dummy variable for English speaking proficiency upon arrival in Portland: Yes (Good or Fair English), No (Poor or No English). No is omitted.
Education	Dummy variable for educational attainment upon arrival in Portland: High (Higher or Secondary education), Low (Primary or No education). High is omitted.
Macroeconomic	
First_U	Maine average statewide unemployment rate during a refugee's first year of work
Recent_U	Maine average statewide unemployment rate during a refugee's most recent year of work
Experience	
Qtrs_Work	Total number of quarters in Maine that a refugee worked
Qtrs_ME	Total number of quarters that a refugee lived in Maine
Social Capital	
Migrant	1=refugee was resettled in Portland originally, 0=refugee moved to Portland as a secondary migrant or an asylee
Sponsor	1=refugee was sponsored by a family member or close friend, 0=otherwise

Overview of the Sample

A significant number of observations in the data had missing values for the variables **English** (175 observations had missing values) and **Education** (111 observations had missing values). Instead of deleting cases with missing data and creating the risk of sample bias, the author used the multiple imputation (MI) technique to create 10 individual datasets with imputed values for the missing data (King et al. 2001). Table 3 describes key characteristics of the sample based on a summary of the imputed data sets.

Table 3: Characteristics of the imputed sample, by gender

	Total	Male	Female
N	938	526	412
Age [mean, SD]	36.0, 13.0	35.5, 12.7	36.6, 13.3
Minor ME	71 (8%)	42 (8%)	29 (7%)
Gender			
Male	526 (56%)	--	--
Female	412 (44%)	--	--
Family Size [mean, SD]	2.6, 1.7	2.4, 1.7	2.7, 1.8
Origin			
Eastern Europe	389 (41%)	208 (40%)	181 (44%)
Sudan	315 (34%)	181 (34%)	134 (33%)
Somalia	234 (25%)	137 (26%)	97 (24%)
Education*			
High (Higher or Secondary)	554 (59%)	347 (66%)	207 (50%)
Low (Primary or None)	384 (41%)	179 (34%)	205 (50%)
English*			
Yes (Good or Fair)	393 (42%)	255 (48%)	138 (33%)
No (Poor or None)	545 (58%)	271 (52%)	274 (66%)
Relation*			
Principal Applicant	512 (55%)	338 (64%)	174 (42%)
Not Principal Applicant	426 (45%)	188 (36%)	238 (58%)
Sponsor*			
Sponsored	673 (72%)	362 (69%)	311 (75%)
Not Sponsored	265 (28%)	164 (31%)	101 (25%)
Migrant*			
General	631 (85%)	402 (76%)	344 (83%)
Secondary Migrant or Asylee	112 (15%)	124 (24%)	68 (17%)
Qtrs_ME [mean, SD]	19.2, 7.5	19.3, 7.3	19.2, 7.7
Qtrs_Work [mean, SD]	15.7, 7.2	15.5, 7.2	16.0, 7.3
Work_First*	664 (71%)	395 (75%)	269 (65%)
Work_Recent*	679 (72%)	406 (77%)	273 (66%)
Earn_First [mean, SD]*	\$19,190, \$11,736	\$20,287, \$12,150	\$17,580, \$10,925
Earn_Recent [mean, SD]*	\$21,231, \$14,484	\$22,143, \$15,232	\$19,875, \$13,204

Note: Administrative data from Catholic Charities Maine and the Maine Department of Labor

* Statistically significant difference between males and females at the 95% confidence level

Demographic and Economic Characteristics of Portland

Prior to describing the methodology and results of this analysis, it is important to understand the society and economy that refugees found in Portland when they arrived, and how their economic outcomes compared to those of typical workers. Table 4 indicates that, compared to the State of Maine, Portland's population is younger, more diverse, and significantly more educated. On the other hand, a larger percentage of Portland's population falls below the poverty line compared to Maine. This, among other factors, results in an average household income in Portland that is over four percent less than that of Maine as a whole.

Table 4: Demographic, human capital and economic characteristics of Portland, Maine and the State of Maine

	Portland	Maine
Total residents	64,249	1,274,923
Male	47.9%	48.7%
Non-white	8.7%	3.1%
Foreign-born	7.6%	3.9%
Median age in years	35.7	38.6
High school or more	88.3%	85.4%
Bachelor's or more	36.4%	22.9%
In the labor force	69.1%	65.3%
Household income (1999)	\$35,650	\$37,240
Below poverty line	14.1%	10.9%

Note: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000

Overall, the economic climate of Portland is healthier than that of Maine. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the labor forces in Portland and the State of Maine grew by about eight percent between 1998 and 2004, but the unemployment rates differed. In fact, the average unemployment rate in Portland between 1998 and 2005 was 3.2 percent, more than one percentage point less than the average unemployment rate in Maine over the same period.

Economic Experiences of Refugees in Portland

In their most recent job, the majority of refugees worked in one of five industries. By far the most popular industry was the administrative services industry, which employed about 20 percent of refugees in their most recent job. Most of the refugees working in this industry were employed by a temporary help services business, which places individuals in a variety of industries for temporary periods of time. The refugee employment concentration in this industry was followed by Social assistance, hospitals, and educational services (14 percent); Manufacturing (13 percent); Accommodation and food services (11 percent); and Wholesale trade (six percent). Male refugees were disproportionately represented in the Manufacturing industry, while female refugees were disproportionately represented in the Accommodation and food services industry. In comparison, in 2004 almost half of the work force in Portland worked in a service industry. Significant portions of Portland's work force were concentrated in "white collar" industries, such as Finance, insurance and real estate, and Professional services.

Refugees earned significantly less than typical workers in Portland, but their earnings improved dramatically over time. Among refugees in the sample who worked in Maine, the median refugee worked in his first job in 2001 and in his most recent job in 2004. The average, inflation-adjusted monthly earnings (2005 dollars) of a refugee during his first year of work was

\$1,570, compared to \$1,790 in his most recent year of work (an increase of 14 percent). In contrast, the Maine Department of Labor estimates that the average, inflation-adjusted monthly earnings (2005 dollars) of a typical worker in Portland in 2001 was \$3,146, compared to \$3,195 in 2004 (an increase of almost two percent).² Though refugees experienced impressive earnings gains compared to typical workers in Portland, they still earned about 45 percent less than typical workers.

Methods

This paper estimates two models, both of which follow the same essential form: a refugee's earnings in Portland are a function of his demographic characteristics, human capital characteristics, macroeconomic conditions, work experience, and access to social capital. Estimating this model through the ordinary least squares method requires a randomly selected sample. Unfortunately, the sample under consideration is not randomly selected. Instead, only those refugees who chose to enter the labor market have earnings and are observed. Since it is not possible to observe a counterfactual in this case (what the earnings of a refugee who did not enter the labor market would be had he entered the labor market) it is likely that an estimation of refugee earnings using ordinary least squares may unwittingly include unobservable characteristics of the refugees who elected to get a job. In other words, there is a case of "selection on the unobservables" (Winship and Morgan 1999).

It is possible to correct for the sample-selection bias problem in this case with a two-step estimation procedure developed by economist James Heckman (Heckman 1979). This technique uses a derived term called the inverse Mill's ratio to correct for sample-selection bias when

² Based on author's calculations using Local Employment Dynamics (LED) data available on the Labor Market Information Services section of the Maine DOL's website (<http://www.maine.gov/labor/lmis/lehd.html>).

estimating earnings. Specifically, the inverse Mill's ratio is “a monotone decreasing function of the probability that an observation is selected into the sample” (Heckman 1979, p. 156).

Generally, the first step of the technique estimates the probability that a refugee worked in Maine and derives the inverse Mill's ratio that reflects this probability. The second step of the technique estimates refugee earnings, using the inverse Mill's ratio as one of many independent variables. The general form of the model used in the second step of this analysis is:

$$\ln(Y_{ij}) = \alpha + \beta X_{ij} + \beta_{invMills_{ij}} + \varepsilon_{ij}$$

where $\ln(Y_{ij})$ is the natural log of earnings for individual i of sex j over some period of time, α is constant term, β represents the coefficients to be estimated, X_{ij} is a vector of independent variables for individual i of sex j , $invMills_{ij}$ is the inverse Mill's ratio for individual i of sex j , and ε_{ij} is a randomly distributed error term.

This paper specifies and estimates two series of models, corresponding to the natural log of earnings in the first and most recent years of work for refugees. The base model in each series uses demographic and human capital variables to estimate the dependent variable. Subsequent models add a variable that controls for macroeconomic conditions in the state, work experience variables (when appropriate), and social capital variables. Each model includes the inverse Mill's ratio as a predictor. Male and female refugees are analyzed separately in each series of models, since overwhelming evidence suggests that gender is an important determinant of earnings for individuals in the U.S. labor market.

Only summarized regression coefficients, standard errors, and goodness of fit statistics from the imputed data sets are presented in this paper (King et al. 2001). The results from the estimation of the probit models used to derive the inverse Mill's ratio are included in **Appendix**

A. All analyses were conducted in R, an open-source computing environment, using the

micEcon and Amelia II statistical analysis packages (Henningsen and Toomet 2006; Honaker, King and Blackwell 2007; R Development Core Team 2006). Though it expands on the methods and data used, the basis of this methodology is similar to that used by Mamgain and Collins (2003) in their study of refugee economic outcomes in Portland, Maine.

Results

Refugee Earnings in the First Year of Work

Table 5 presents results from a series of models that estimate the natural log of earnings during the first year of work for female and male refugees in the sample. Since this represents the first work experience of the refugees in Maine, independent variables that control for work experience in Maine are not used as predictors in these models. Overall, a refugee's age played the most significant role in determining his or her earnings in the first year of work in Maine. An additional year in age was associated with an 18 percent increase in earnings for female refugees (Model 4) and a 15 percent increase in earnings for male refugees (Model 8). Not surprisingly, for both female and male refugees arriving in Portland as a minor was associated with substantially lower earnings in their first year of work. The ability to speak English and educational attainment were not statistically significant predictors of first year earnings for either female or male refugees. Sponsorship did not have a statistically significant effect on the first year earnings of female or male refugees.

Table 5: Multiple regression results for first year earnings

Parameter estimates, approximate p-values, and associated goodness-of-fit statistics for a nested taxonomy of OLS-fitted regression models that describe the relationship between log of **female** (N=269) and **male** (N=395) refugee earnings in their **first year of work** in Portland, Maine and demographic and human capital characteristics; macroeconomic conditions in Maine; and access to social capital. **Models 1-4 correspond to female refugees and Models 5-8 correspond to male refugees.**

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
Intercept	6.1702** (0.7554)	6.4070** (0.8232)	6.3231** (0.8301)	5.9119** (0.7079)	6.5064** (0.4985)	6.5263** (0.6043)	6.4420** (0.6117)	6.2934** (0.4801)
Age	0.1687** (0.0375)	0.1707** (0.0378)	0.1713** (0.0378)	0.1803** (0.0359)	0.1486** (0.0240)	0.1485** (0.0240)	0.1489** (0.0241)	0.1561** (0.0230)
Age_sq	-0.0020** (0.0005)	-0.0021** (0.0005)	-0.0021** (0.0005)	-0.0022** (0.0005)	-0.0016** (0.0003)	-0.0016** (0.0003)	-0.0016** (0.0003)	-0.0017** (0.0003)
Minor_ME	-1.1080** (0.2280)	-1.101** (0.2278)	-1.0911** (0.2281)	-1.0139** (0.2231)	-1.0289** (0.1707)	-1.0295** (0.1709)	-1.0192** (0.1709)	-1.0047** (0.1599)
English.Yes	0.1680 (0.1215)	0.1661 (0.1217)	0.1757 (0.1224)		-0.0198 (0.0988)	-0.0199 (0.0931)	-0.0061 (0.0947)	
Education.Low	-0.0403 (0.1502)	-0.0494 (0.1515)	-0.0616 (0.1565)		-0.0604 (0.0988)	-0.0612 (0.0996)	-0.0836 (0.1020)	
Origin.Somalia	-0.1963 (0.1403)	-0.2000 (0.1402)	-0.1730 (0.1589)		-0.1802~ (0.1058)	-0.1807~ (0.1061)	-0.1509 (0.1117)	
Origin.Sudan	-0.1825 (0.1316)	-0.1816 (0.1316)	-0.1769 (0.1333)		-0.0295 (0.1010)	-0.0297 (0.1011)	-0.0235 (0.1019)	
First_U		-0.0706 (0.0989)	-0.0770 (0.1053)			-0.0042 (0.0751)	-0.0110 (0.0758)	
Migrant			0.0559 (0.1463)				0.0846 (0.1001)	
Sponsor			0.0590 (0.1100)				0.0330 (0.0779)	
invMillsRatio	0.6682** (0.2157)	0.7039** (0.2219)	0.6920** (0.2277)	0.5592** (0.2110)	0.6665** (0.2359)	0.6665** (0.2359)	0.6889** (0.2398)	0.6024** (0.2216)
R ²	0.3135	0.3150	0.3163	0.2935	0.4085	0.4085	0.4100	0.4007
Adj-R ²	0.2924	0.2912	0.2871	0.2828	0.3963	0.3947	0.3931	0.3945

Key: ~ p< .10; * p< .05; ** p < .01 (Standard errors are in parentheses)

Refugee Earnings in the Most Recent Year of Work

Table 6 summarizes findings from a series of models that estimate the natural log of earnings during the most recent year of work for female and male refugees in the sample. In contrast to their first year of work in Maine, by their most recent year of work in Maine, refugees have usually accumulated experiences in the local community and economy that may help to determine earnings. Therefore, some of the models in these tables include independent variables that control for work experience and time spent in Portland. The age of refugees played an important role in determining their earnings in their most recent year of work, but work experience was also an important factor in determining earnings in these models. The ability to speak English and educational attainment were not statistically significant predictors of most recent year earnings for either female or male refugees. Sponsorship had a negative effect on female refugee earnings in their most recent year of work in Maine, but a positive effect on male refugee earnings in their most recent year of work in Maine.

The inclusion of temporal variables in Model 11 resulted in a change to the sign of the coefficient and statistical significance of the average statewide unemployment rate in a female refugee's most recent year of work. The change in level of statistical significance and the sign and size of the coefficient suggests an unstable relationship between this control for macroeconomic conditions and the temporal variables introduced in Model 11. In keeping with findings from previous research, female refugee work experience had a positive relationship with earnings in the most recent year of work. Sponsorship had a negative effect on earnings during the most recent year of work for female refugees. In fact, Model 13 predicts that, all else equal, sponsored female refugees earned about 24 percent less in their most recent year of work in Maine than non-sponsored female refugees.

Table 6 also shows that, similar to female refugees, temporal variables had an unstable relationship with macroeconomic conditions during the most recent year of work for male refugees. In addition, age, age squared, and work experience were important predictors of most recent year earnings for male refugees, but in contrast to female refugees, country of origin was also important. In fact, male refugees from Somalia and the Sudan earned about 25 percent less than their Eastern European counterparts in their most recent year of work. The ability to speak English and educational attainment were not statistically significant predictors in any of the models for male refugees. Results in Model 18 indicate that access to co-ethnic social capital had a positive effect on the earnings of male refugees in their most recent year of work in Maine. Male refugees who were originally resettled in Portland earned about 27 percent more than male refugees who elected to move from their original resettlement city to Portland. In addition, sponsored male refugees earned about 17 percent more than their non-sponsored counterparts.

Table 6: Multiple regression results for most recent year earnings

Parameter estimates, approximate p-values, and associated goodness-of-fit statistics for a nested taxonomy of OLS-fitted regression models that describe the relationship between the log of **female** (N=273) and **male** (N=406) refugee earnings in their **most recent year of work** in Portland, Maine and their demographic and human capital characteristics; macroeconomic conditions in Maine; work experience; and access to social capital. **Models 9-13 correspond to female refugees and Models 14-18 correspond to male refugees.**

	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	M14	M15	M16	M17	M18
Intercept	6.0298** (0.8661)	5.2437** (1.3267)	10.4015** (1.4237)	10.8248** (1.4425)	10.6618** (1.3850)	7.5416** (0.6025)	6.8913** (0.9397)	11.9689** (0.9868)	11.4639** (0.9874)	11.2877** (0.9840)
Age	0.1891** (0.0428)	0.1890** (0.0428)	0.1262** (0.0388)	0.1256** (0.0387)	0.1188** (0.0347)	0.1133** (0.0293)	0.1131** (0.0293)	0.0630* (0.0261)	0.0655* (0.0258)	0.0836** (0.0232)
Age_sq	-0.0023** (0.0005)	-0.0023** (0.0005)	-0.0015** (0.0005)	-0.0015** (0.0005)	-0.0015** (0.0004)	-0.0012** (0.0004)	-0.0012** (0.0004)	-0.0006~ (0.0003)	-0.0006* (0.0003)	-0.0009* (0.0003)
Minor_ME	-0.2975 (0.2830)	-0.3100 (0.2832)	0.2460 (0.2627)	0.2803 (0.2612)		-0.7590** (0.2201)	-0.7678** (0.2200)	-0.2314 (0.2049)	-0.2023 (0.2029)	
English.Yes	-0.0001 (0.1454)	-0.0045 (0.1454)	-0.0022 (0.1300)	-0.0098 (0.1317)		-0.0223 (0.1166)	-0.0204 (0.1161)	-0.0017 (0.1033)	0.0499 (0.1037)	
Education.Low	0.0404 (0.1693)	0.0433 (0.1689)	-0.0473 (0.1469)	-0.0496 (0.1481)		-0.0367 (0.1317)	-0.0316 (0.1315)	0.0029 (0.1206)	-0.0836 (0.1232)	
Origin.Somalia	-0.3557* (0.2097)	-0.3621* (0.1730)	-0.0916 (0.1541)	-0.0813 (0.1734)		-0.6106** (0.1412)	-0.6202** (0.1415)	-0.3911** (0.1296)	-0.2655~ (0.1361)	-0.2673* (0.1244)
Origin.Sudan	-0.2244 (0.1591)	-0.2368 (0.1596)	0.0483 (0.1441)	0.0428 (0.1444)		-0.3122* (0.1293)	-0.3284** (0.1304)	-0.2907* (0.1214)	-0.2395* (0.1213)	-0.2326* (0.1100)
Recent_U		0.1743 (0.2231)	-0.7795** (0.2215)	-0.8022** (0.2206)	-0.7536** (0.2153)		0.1440 (0.1608)	-0.6929** (0.1632)	-0.7184** (0.1620)	-0.7457** (0.1603)
Qtrs_ME			-0.0656** (0.0142)	-0.0735** (0.0147)	-0.0674** (0.0135)			-0.0874** (0.0106)	-0.0811** (0.0107)	-0.0855** (0.0101)
Time_Work			0.0995** (0.0107)	0.1011** (0.0106)	0.0988** (0.0101)			0.0944** (0.0092)	0.0940** (0.0091)	0.0967** (0.0089)
Migrant				0.0289 (0.1575)					0.3104** (0.1171)	0.2737** (0.1108)
Sponsor				-0.2493* (0.1221)	-0.2394* (0.1218)				0.1793~ (0.0942)	0.1680~ (0.0940)
invMillsRatio	0.4220 (0.2643)	0.4102 (0.2643)	0.4550 (0.2897)	0.4619 (0.2913)	0.4772 (0.2872)	0.2875 (0.2801)	0.2691 (0.2799)	-0.0538 (0.2662)	0.1086 (0.2691)	0.1304 (0.2701)
R ²	0.1543	0.1562	0.3626	0.3724	0.3655	0.2358	0.2373	0.3994	0.4156	0.4117
Adj-R ²	0.1287	0.1273	0.3358	0.3409	0.3488	0.2203	0.2199	0.3826	0.3963	0.3969

Key: ~ p< .10; * p< .05; ** p < .01 (Standard errors are in parentheses)

Discussion

Prior to a discussion of these research results, it is important to understand the limitations of this study. First, the data come from a cross-section of refugees from a single city in the U.S. so it is not possible to generalize these findings for refugees or immigrants overall. A more ambitious longitudinal research design that compared the economic outcomes of refugees in small and large cities over a longer period of time would add considerably to the explanatory power of any research findings. Second, it was not possible to include data regarding households in this analysis. The possible effects of single versus two-parent headed households on refugee economic outcomes are missing from this analysis. This is a weakness of this study since substantial evidence on immigrants suggests that households are a preferred unit of analysis. Third, though qualitative evidence indicates that sponsorship is an appropriate measure of access to co-ethnic social capital upon arrival to Portland, it does not actually measure the extent to which refugees used co-ethnic social capital to help them in the labor market or in other aspects of life related to the labor market.

The results from this research partially support the hypotheses laid out earlier in this paper. Hypothesis 1 was that male and female sponsored refugees would earn more in their first year of work compared to male and female non-sponsored refugees. My results failed to support this hypothesis. For female and male refugees, sponsorship was not a statistically significant predictor of earnings in the first year of work in Maine. Hypothesis 2 was that sponsored male refugees would earn more in their most recent year of work compared to non-sponsored male refugees. My results for male refugees support this hypothesis, since sponsorship had a positive and statistically significant effect on male refugee earnings in their most recent year of work. Hypothesis 3 was that sponsored female refugees would earn less in their most recent year of

work than non-sponsored female refugees. Research results for female refugees showing that sponsored female refugees earned less than comparable non-sponsored female refugees support this hypothesis. The research results suggest two minor findings and one major finding that warrant attention.

Minor Findings

The first minor finding is that the ability to speak English and educational attainment were not significant factors in determining the earnings of refugees in their first or most recent years of work. These human capital characteristics may have been insignificant for several reasons. In models estimating the first year of earnings, the lack of statistical significance for the English and educational attainment predictors suggest that, at least initially, male and female refugees are an undifferentiated pool of unskilled workers. Reflecting the devaluation of refugee educational credentials outside of their country of origin (Colic-Peisker and Walker 2003) and an urgency to find work, refugees initially compete for the same pool of available low skill jobs, rather than sorting into jobs that match their educational attainment level or English fluency.

My own observations suggest that, even by their most recent year of work, jobs that are available to the bulk of refugees in Portland depend less on their ability to communicate well in English and more on their ability to learn by example. The significant proportion of refugees working in the manufacturing industry, which requires little communication with the public, for their most recent job in Portland supports my observations. Also, for models estimating the most recent year of earnings for refugees, these results could be a function of measurement error. For example, a refugee's ability to speak English and educational attainment were measured upon arrival to Portland and may be poor measures of a refugees' ability to speak English and

educational attainment after several years of attending English classes and other training while living in Portland.

The second minor finding is that in their most recent year of earnings, male refugees who resettled in Portland earned more than male refugees who moved to Portland as secondary migrants. Even though secondary migrants in this sample used the services of CCMRIS, I found that secondary migrants lacked familiarity with the organization and had only a weakly developed relationship with a case manager. The combination of these two factors may have dissuaded them from using the services intensely, resulting in them getting less support from CCMRIS than other refugees. In addition, social ties and an understanding of the local labor market in the original resettlement city are probably of little use in the new resettlement context. On the other hand, it is also possible that secondary migrants move to a new city because they have been unsuccessful finding a job in the original resettlement context because of lack of job opportunities or because they lack valuable labor market skills. More information about the secondary migrant population, including their reasons for moving to Portland, would help to shed light on this result.

Major Finding

The major finding in this research is the different relationship between sponsorship and earnings in the most recent years of work for female and male refugees. In their most recent year of work, sponsored female refugees earned less than non-sponsored female refugees. In contrast, sponsored male refugees earned more than non-sponsored male refugees in their most recent year of work. Informed by my observations of refugees in institutional, social and religious settings in Portland, and interviews that I conducted with refugees during the year that I lived

there conducting this research, I believe that the different ways that sponsored and non-sponsored refugees experienced social capital help to explain these results.

Because they had access to co-ethnic social capital upon arrival in Portland, sponsored refugees are likely to be subject to the social norms and reciprocity that define social capital to a greater degree than non-sponsored refugees (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). For example, Somali women in Portland tend to wear the traditional long and flowing clothing prescribed by a typical interpretation of the *Qur'an* in Somalia (McMichael 2002). Two of the largest and most successful manufacturing businesses in Portland pay relatively high wages and hire large numbers of refugees, but have strict guidelines that require production employees to wear clothing that will not become entangled in equipment, potentially causing damage to the equipment or personal injury to the employee. To be eligible to work at these jobs, Somali women would have to reject their traditional clothing and adopt Western-style dress that reveals the contours of their bodies, something that is forbidden in a public setting by some interpretations of the *Qur'an*.

In addition to the personal question of faith and adherence to religious principles that adopting Western-style dress represents for Somali women, they also face social pressure from the Portland Somali community to maintain their traditional dress. Since, by definition, sponsored Somali female refugees have more social ties and likely receive more assistance from social ties in the Somali community than their non-sponsored counterparts, they experience more of this pressure and stand to lose more from the stigma and ostracism likely to follow a decision to change their dress and work at one of these businesses. Therefore, consistent with my research results that indicate lower earnings for sponsored female refugees, I observed that,

compared to non-sponsored Somali female refugees, sponsored Somali female refugees were less likely to stray from important customs and had less access to good paying jobs as a result.

In addition, co-ethnic social ties expect for sponsored female refugees who received assistance when they arrived in Portland to reciprocate this assistance by assuming family or extended family responsibilities that limit their ability to work in the labor market (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). For example, my observations suggest that sponsored female refugees often helped close friends and extended family members with informal and temporary child care and a variety of household chores, including cooking and cleaning. They provided this help because their social ties requested their assistance, but also as a part of an unspoken tradition imported from their countries of origin. In formal interviews and informal discussions, these sponsored female refugees discussed how this type of labor pooling was common back home as a way for women to ease the burden of their tasks and socialize simultaneously. In comparison to sponsored female refugees, non-sponsored female refugees had fewer reciprocal obligations because they had fewer social ties when they arrived in Portland. Over time, non-sponsored female refugees increased the size of their social networks in Portland, but after staring at a disadvantage, their social networks rarely approached the size or intimacy of the social networks of sponsored female refugees. Therefore, sponsored female refugees felt these reciprocal obligations more acutely than their non-sponsored counterparts and spent more time outside of the labor market as a result.

In contrast to female refugees, male refugees face a different set of social norms and reciprocal obligations. For example, social norms for male refugees in Portland frown on not participating in the labor market. My interviews with male refugees in Portland indicate that, based on cultural norms from their countries of origin, they expect (and feel social pressure) to

arrange financial support for their families and extended families to a greater extent than females. In addition, the co-ethnics who assist male refugees when they arrive in Portland sometimes expect reciprocal obligations that involve financial support, including help paying bills, investing in start-up businesses, or remitting money to friends and relatives still living in refugee camps or various countries of origin. These norms and reciprocal obligations have the effect of encouraging labor market participation, but sponsored and non-sponsored male refugees probably experience these expectations differently. Because of their initial connections to co-ethnics when they arrive in Portland, sponsored male refugees seemed to feel pressure to conform to cultural norms more than non-sponsored male refugees. Similarly, sponsored male refugees may have more reciprocal obligations than their non-sponsored counterparts. As a result, compared to their non-sponsored counterparts, sponsored male refugees felt a greater need to conform to cultural norms and rise to obligations that ultimately encouraged labor market activity. Research that focuses more explicitly on how norms and reciprocity differ for male and female refugees could help to clarify how experience with social capital varies by gender.

The different earnings outcomes for sponsored male and female refugees also could have occurred because of how each group used co-ethnic social capital. By definition, sponsored refugees had more access to co-ethnic social capital in Portland than non-sponsored refugees. However, the effect that this co-ethnic social capital had on earnings is directly related to the quality of jobs held by co-ethnic social ties (Green, Tigges and Diaz 1999). For example, one explanation of the observed earnings differential between male and female refugees shown in Table 3, is that male refugees had higher quality jobs than female refugees, resulting in better quality jobs for men who used social ties to help them find employment than similarly positioned women (Huffman and Torres 2002). Similarly, other research on working-class Mexicans finds

that the social networks of men focus on the work world, while the social networks of women are more likely to focus on everyday, “getting by” issues (Gonzalez de la Rocha 1994). If this is true in Portland, then the social networks of sponsored men would be more helpful for finding employment than the social networks of sponsored women. In this case, non-sponsored female refugees may be better off using the resources of their case manager than sponsored female refugees who get assistance from their social networks. Indeed my research finding that non-sponsored female refugees fared better in the labor market than sponsored female refugees supports this idea. Research that focuses on the use of social ties for job searches and the job trajectories of sponsored and non-sponsored refugees could shed light on the role of co-ethnic social capital in determining job quality for refugees.

Despite the stated importance of employment for refugees in the enabling legislation for the refugee resettlement program in the U.S. (Kennedy 1981), there is a general question about the wisdom of focusing on earnings alone as the appropriate outcome of interest when measuring the effects of social capital. In isolation from other outcomes, my interpretation of the results from this study assumes that refugees with lower earnings are worse off than those with higher earnings. However, it may be more useful to think of how social capital affects multiple outcomes in people’s lives simultaneously. My observations indicate that sponsored refugees real costs associated with using social capital, but also could take advantage of non-pecuniary benefits unavailable to non-sponsored refugees. For example, sponsored female refugees frequently acknowledged expectations from their social ties regarding responsibility for child care and help with household chores for extended family members and friends that their non-sponsored counterparts did not. While these obligations constrained the amount of time that sponsored females could participate in the labor market, it also opened up the possibility that

they could request reciprocation from their social ties when they needed child care and other types of assistance in their households. In contrast, non-sponsored females were typically on their own when arranging and paying for childcare, and performing household chores. How sponsored female refugees valued reciprocal contributions from social ties and how researchers should factor these contributions into analyses of the effects of social capital on the lives of refugees are open questions that a more comprehensive study must address.

Whether or not earnings alone is the best outcome to focus on, my research results indicate that co-ethnic social capital can affect refugee earnings positively or negatively, depending upon gender. These results expand our understanding of the concept of embeddedness (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993), or how social relationships shape economic behavior. Sponsored female refugees appear to be overly embedded, at least from the standpoint of their employment prospects, through excessive obligations and stricter adherence to social norms that can become barriers to working. On the other hand, sponsored men enjoy mainly the upsides of embeddedness, since the obligations and stricter adherence to social norms they experience compel them to work.

The fundamental insight from my research finding is that males and females both experience heightened obligations and greater pressure to adhere to social norms when they receive assistance from their social ties, but the obligations and social norms differ by gender and lead to different economic outcomes. This finding expands on the research of Stack (1974), who found that poor African American women experienced constant obligations from their social networks. It also expands on the findings of Menjivar's (2000) study of male and female Salvadoran immigrants in the San Francisco Bay Area. Menjivar found that female Salvadoran immigrants had more difficulty accessing informal assistance than male Salvadoran immigrants,

since male Salvadorans had greater access to goods and services than female Salvadorans. I found that even when both men and women have access to informal aid, being too embedded can have real labor market costs for women that men seem able to escape. When focusing on earnings as an outcome, this embeddedness has the effect of increasing the relative advantage experienced by men with high levels of social capital and the relative disadvantage experienced by women with high levels of social capital.

But what should organizations that help refugees with resettlement do with this information? After all, it is unlikely that refugee resettlement service providers can realistically alter refugee social networks. At the same time, it may be ethically dubious for service providers to interfere with established social networks and social norms in the refugee co-ethnic community. However, refugee resettlement service providers should not stand by idly while some of their refugee clients experience adverse outcomes in the labor market. Following similar policy recommendations from Harrison and Weiss (1998) and Briggs (1998), I believe that formal organizations should help to compensate for what social networks do not ensure. This is particularly true when formal organizations have a good understanding of the types of resources that social networks within a particular population, or segment of a population, fail to provide. As organizations increase their understanding of which groups of individuals cannot rely on social networks, or which groups of individuals rely on social networks and experience negative outcomes as a result, they can behave more strategically by modifying the type and timing of services and resources they offer to compensate certain individuals and ensure more equitable outcomes.

For example, the traditional policies in place to assist refugees with resettlement are most intense in the beginning of a refugee's life in the resettlement context. Findings from this

research suggest that it may be advantageous to vary service delivery of employment assistance according to when refugees need support the most. For many cases, front-loading employment assistance makes sense because the beginning of a refugee's life in the U.S. is when he or she is likely to need the most assistance in the labor market. However, sponsored female and non-sponsored male refugees may need additional intensive services later in their time in the resettlement city. Service provision for these refugees who have lived in a resettlement city for an extended period of time but advanced relatively little in the labor market may include help with job searches and job training, but also conflict mediation to help settle disputes regarding gender roles in the refugee community. Clearly, the core competencies of intermediaries are important here, since it could be potentially disastrous for an organization that specializes in workforce development to attempt to mediate a culturally specific dispute regarding gender roles. With appropriate social service intermediaries and timing of assistance in place, it may be possible to ensure more equitable labor market outcomes for male and female refugees during their resettlement.

Chapter 3: “I don’t expect to go and beg from them”: The Logic of Refugee Social Tie Activation

Introduction

Empirical studies have clearly demonstrated the importance of social capital, or using social ties to access resources, for individuals as they seek help ranging from finding employment to recovering from natural disasters to securing emotional support (Fernandez, Castilla and Moore 2000; Hurlbert, Haines and Beggs 2000; Putnam 1993). To date, many of the research questions in the social capital literature have focused on what kinds of social ties provide what kinds of assistance (Wellman and Frank 2001). The nature of these research questions encourages the use of surveys to collect appropriate data on social networks and the use of these networks, obscuring the micro-level interactions within social networks that form the basis of social capital (Bernard et al. 1990; Kemper and Collins 1990; Wellman 1981). This has led to a limited and unsubstantiated discussion of the motivating factors behind an individual’s decision to access social capital, a process called social tie activation. Therefore, despite the large amount of prior research on the importance of social networks and how social networks facilitate access to resources, we know relatively little about what motivates individuals to activate one social tie over another in their social networks.

Understanding these motivations is particularly important when considering individuals in financially tenuous positions, since they frequently rely on social ties to help them in their daily lives. For example, research that focuses on the underclass and the working poor in America has identified support from social ties as an important aspect of survival for low-income individuals (Newman 1999; Stack 1974). Equally significant, but comparatively less studied, are informal sources of social support for immigrants (Hagan 1998; Menjivar 2000; Portes and

Sensenbrenner 1993). Specifically, researchers know little about social support for immigrants in small cities, suburbs and rural areas, places that have received increasing numbers of immigrants in the last decade (Singer 2004). These new immigrant receiving areas have smaller immigrant populations and less experience with diversity compared to more traditional immigrant gateways, suggesting that the experiences of immigrants living there may also differ significantly from the experiences of immigrants in traditional immigrant gateways (Hein 2006; Marrow 2005).

As a subgroup of immigrants with particularly acute needs when they arrive in the U.S., refugees, or immigrants who flee their countries of origin because of persecution or the real threat of persecution (Black 2001), offer an extreme case to study social tie activation. The lives of refugees are marked by dramatic and unanticipated changes that occur in a short period of time. Regardless of former socio-economic class, educational attainment, or level of English fluency, virtually all refugees arrive in the U.S. with few material resources, shrunken social networks upon which to draw support, and plentiful and intense needs (Gold 1992; Holman 1996). A system of resettlement assistance funded by the U.S. government and provided by nonprofit organizations helps refugees find a place to live and a job; buy food and seek medical care; and learn English, but ambitious expectations of how quickly refugees will become self-sufficient result in short time limits on these services (Haines, Rutherford and Thomas 1981; Haines 1996). Because refugees are such extreme cases, faced with the prospect of fulfilling their needs without much time to adjust to a new context and with few social ties upon which to draw support, I argue that it is easier to isolate their social tie activation decisions. As a result, studying the social tie activation decisions of refugees can help us to understand how refugees in the U.S. think about and use social support from their co-ethnic communities and beyond, but

also may illuminate the thought process behind social tie activation for individuals more generally.

This study looks into the “black box” of social tie activation decisions of refugees from Somalia and the Sudan who have recently resettled in Portland, Maine, a small, homogenous city in the U.S. It answers the question when refugees choose to activate social ties, what logic do they use to decide which one to activate? My research results suggest that refugees make social tie activation decisions based on self-interest that is shaped by a variety of factors, including the degree of trust between refugees and their social ties; what type of resource refugees are seeking from their social ties; the place of refugees in the social structure vis-à-vis their social ties; and the reason they are seeking the resource. In other words, each of these factors shapes the social tie activation decisions of refugees in particular ways that ultimately affect how refugees seek informal assistance.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. First, a review of relevant literature focuses on motivations for social tie activation in the social capital and help seeking literatures. The second section introduces the methods and data used in this study. The third and fourth sections describe the new reality confronting refugees in the sample and a mental model of social tie activation for refugees, respectively. Finally, a fifth section discusses the implications of research findings.

What Accounts for Social Tie Activation?

Who gives what to whom depends upon the characteristics of the giver and receiver, their relationship, and the composition and structure of the social network in which the two are imbedded (Wellman and Frank 2001; Wellman and Wortley 1990). Close friends and family

members, or “strong ties,” are known for providing emotional support and everyday assistance, while acquaintances, or “weak ties,” are known for providing information and other resources (Burt 1992; Granovetter 1973; Lin 2001a). Socio-economic class plays a role in how individuals use their social ties for support, since lower-class individuals may need to rely on weak ties to help them “get ahead” while upper-class individuals can use strong ties to help them “get by” and “get ahead” (Briggs 1998). In examining the dichotomy between strong and weak ties, scholars identify uneven levels of trust that help to define the relationships, suggesting that trust is an important determining factor in social tie activation (DiMaggio and Louch 1998).

Similarly, network structure and composition is an important determinant of social tie activation (Kana'iaupuni et al. 2005). Individuals who need assistance are more likely to activate a member of their core social network (social ties they interact with frequently) if their core social networks are dense (most alters know each other) and have a high proportion of men and relatives (Hurlbert, Haines and Beggs 2000). In addition, a wide range and large proportion of high status individuals in a core social network encourages tie activation within the core (Renzulli and Aldrich 2005). These are helpful observations, but without empirical evidence at the micro-personal level, they do little to clarify motivations for social tie activation.

In searching for these motivations, the literature on social capital and the place of social capital in the larger debate on human agency and social structure is a useful place to start. To simplify the central question in the agency-structure debate, when an individual acts, does he do so because of his own free will to satisfy his self-interests (agency) or because of the social context in which he finds himself (structure)? The essential premise of rational choice theory is that individuals make conscious and sub-conscious decisions according to the logic of self-interest (Becker 1976). The structuralist perspective argues that self-interest may drive action,

but self-interest is a social concept that is defined and made meaningful by culture, or schemes that humans devise to structure their lives (Sahlins 1976). Most important in this concept is the power of symbols and shared meanings of behavior, called social norms, in guiding action.

Research on social capital blends the strengths of rational choice theory and structuralism to explain exchange between social ties. In uniting these ideas, scholars adopt the argument that self-interest drives exchange between social ties, but that social norms shape this self-interest (Alexander 1988; Somers 1998). For example, Coleman contends that human action must be analyzed through the twin lenses of utility maximization and the ability of a social context to shape, constrain and redirect action (1988). This implicitly introduces a more complex analytic frame that simultaneously stresses the power of self-interest in motivating action and the importance of social context in directing action.

Social capital scholars have emphasized self-interest and social norms differently in explaining the actions of individuals seeking assistance and individuals providing assistance in an exchange. For most social capital scholars, the motivation for those seeking assistance is based on pure self-interest. From their perspective, individuals want access to a resource that they currently do not have and seek to gain access through the activation of one of their social ties. For example, Lin argues that “social capital consists of resources embedded in social relations and social structure, which can be mobilized *when an actor wishes to increase the likelihood of success in a purposive action*” (2001b, p. 24, emphasis added). Other social capital scholars believe that “people maneuver to form relationships and find support from them” in response to opportunities and challenges in their daily lives (Wellman and Frank 2001, p. 258).

On the other hand, social capital scholars argue that social norms commonly shape the self-interest of individuals who are called upon to provide assistance to others. Building on a foundation supplied by dual exchange theorists (Ekeh 1974; Mitchell 1969; Uehara 1990), Portes has identified several social norms that shape the self-interest of social ties that give assistance (Portes 1998). One norm, reciprocity, could occur because of a spoken or unspoken agreement between the ties involved in the exchange or because of social pressures in the group (“enforceable trust”). Social ties may also provide assistance because they are acting on internalized norms learned through particular socialization processes (“value introjection”). Finally, an intense identification with others in the group, known as “bounded solidarity,” may explain why social ties provide assistance. These concepts are well illustrated in a variety of research findings, but especially in Sandra Susan Smith’s (2005) work that focuses on the assistance and lack of assistance provided by the social ties of working-class and poor African Americans. Using interview data, Smith finds that lower class African Americans may fail to provide employment assistance for their social ties because of concerns that their social ties will not perform well on the job and harm their reputations as a result.

In addition to shaping the self-interest of individuals who provide assistance to others, these social norms could also shape the self-interest of individuals who seek assistance from others. For example, reputation concerns might also play a role in social tie activation decisions for those seeking assistance. Much as providing assistance carries a message to members of a social network that enhances the stature of the individual providing assistance (Lin 2001b), asking for assistance sends a signal about the individual seeking assistance. This message could be a flattering one, similar to the prestige effect noted by Laumann (1966), or a negative one that damages the reputation of the individual seeking assistance because it significantly reduces their

stature within their social network. Determining which message is carried forward is largely socially determined.

Similarly, social norms could also help to determine social tie activation from the perspective of those seeking resources. For example, an individual may be likely to activate a social tie with whom he has had repeated reciprocal exchanges in the past, because of the trust and expectations that develop as a part of this history. Internalized norms may push an individual to activate a particular social tie because he has been socialized to associate the provision of a certain type of assistance with a particular type of social tie. Bounded solidarity, based on widely shared social scripts that distinguish “us” and “them,” could encourage social tie activation because of norms that define group membership.

Other examples of social norms that affect social tie activation come from studies of help seeking behavior. Findings suggest that cultural norms, social relational dynamics and social structures play important roles in shaping individual outlooks (Stanton-Salazar and Spina 2000). These socialization processes affect an individual’s propensity to activate social ties, or his network orientation (Tolsdorf 1976). For example, the mythical status of the “Horatio Algers” success story in the U.S. has resulted in a socially constructed ideal of resilience that celebrates independence and individual achievement, and frowns upon seeking assistance from others. Smith’s concept of “defensive individualism” carries this idea forward as an extreme, with individuals failing to ask for assistance or rejecting assistance that is offered in order to preserve their dignity and project an air of independence (Smith forthcoming).

The social psychology literature has shown that status has an important effect on people’s expectations regarding the abilities of others, encouraging higher expectations for high status individuals than low status individuals (Thye 2000; Webster and Foschi 1998). These

expectations frequently match reality since high status individuals are more likely to have larger social networks and command more resources than low status individuals. However, these expectations place elite refugees in an awkward position: while they are more financially secure than their non-elite counterparts, elite refugees still find themselves in vulnerable financial positions and in control of only slightly more resources. As a result, elite refugees still need monetary and non-monetary support to help them get by.

Other studies provide more evidence of the important role of social norms in determining how and when individuals choose to seek assistance. For example, HIV-positive South Asian immigrants in the U.S. use notions of destiny and shame when deciding to seek help and from whom to seek it (Bhattacharya 2004). Additionally, socially constructed conceptions of justice, shame, and victimization help to determine what types of help victims access, including the activation of social ties (Kaukinen 2002). As these research findings indicate, social tie activation is shaped by culturally determined understandings of why help is needed and the potential social repercussions involved with seeking assistance.

Other examples of social tie activation studies that focus on immigrants suggest an important role for social norms in shaping social tie activation decisions. For example, Cubans who remained on the island initially viewed other Cubans who immigrated to the U.S. shortly after the Cuban revolution as pariahs (Eckstein 2006). In addition to state policies that made contact with these émigrés difficult and potentially risky, the shame felt by their friends and family-members living in Cuba resulted in their failure to activate social ties in the U.S. to access financial and material resources (Eckstein 2006). Only later, after the fall of the Soviet Union and the subsequent cessation of Soviet support of Cuba, were these Cuban émigrés recast as saviors and the possibility of social tie activation reopened.

In her book *Fragmented Ties*, Cecilia Menjivar discusses how notions of what family and extended family are supposed to provide governed initial social tie activation by newly arrived undocumented Salvadorans in California. Eventually, concern over reputation and fear of gossip severely limited or redirected social tie activation for female Salvadorans who were afraid of being inaccurately labeled sexually promiscuous after activating non-family male social ties for resources as mundane as a ride in a car (Menjivar 2000). Following in the footsteps of Stack (1974), Menjivar's findings suggest that social norms like bounded solidarity that usually encourage social tie activation may be overwhelmed by economic realities that limit the resources available to share with others and new social norms that develop as a result.

This paper responds to a call by a group of social capital scholars to collect "detailed information that taps *why* individuals rely upon particular ties, inside and outside their core networks, for particular social resources" (Hurlbert, Haines and Beggs 2000, p. 616). Current research on social tie activation suggests an important role for social norms, but falls short of explaining how social norms enter the calculus of social tie activation and how these norms interact with self-interest and contextual realities to guide social tie activation. With this shortcoming in mind, this study presents an empirically grounded understanding of social tie activation, by focusing on the extreme case of resettled refugees in the U.S.

Sample and Research Methods

Portland, Maine is currently home to thousands of refugees from many countries in Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia. Despite the presence of such a diverse refugee community, Portland remains a relatively homogenous city, with almost 94 percent of its population native born according to the 2005 American Community Survey. The sample used in this study

consisted of sponsored and non-sponsored refugees from Somalia and the Sudan. Sponsored refugees have a close friend or relative living in Portland before they arrive, while non-sponsored refugees were, for all practical purposes, randomly assigned to resettle in Portland and may or may not have known anyone upon arrival to the city. These refugees began to arrive in Portland in the mid-1990s and continue to resettle there today.

Data came from 42 semi-structured, face-to-face interviews of Sudanese and Somali refugees. Ideally I would have sampled interviewees randomly from the Sudanese and Somali adults living in Portland, but generating a random sample was undesirable for two reasons. First, a reliable sampling frame with up-to-date contact information for refugees in Portland does not exist. Second, I was interested in the effect of elite status on refugee social tie activation. Elites are relatively rare in refugee communities and elite status is not easily discernible from administrative data, the only source of a possible, if imperfect, sampling frame. Therefore, any attempt at a random sample would have probably resulted in a sample with unsatisfactorily low numbers of refugee elites. Instead of sampling randomly, I snowball sampled interviewees from multiple entry points into the Somali and Sudanese communities, including government-sponsored English language classes, social service agencies, and religious institutions.

Snowball sampling has advantages and disadvantages. It increases access to hard to reach populations and individuals who are unlikely to respond positively to a “cold call” (Goldman 1961), two characteristics that describe refugees. Unfortunately, as a non-random sampling technique, snowball sampling potentially introduces sample bias into the study (King, Keohane and Verba 1994). To minimize this type of bias and ensure variation in the sample on the independent variables important to me, I sampled purposively from potential interviewees generated from the snowball method (Troost 1986). The sample included variation on country of

origin, tribe, sponsorship status, and social status since they give some indication of the degree to which a refugee had an existing social network in place when he or she arrived in Portland (sponsorship status) and allow an analysis of how bounded solidarity (country of origin and tribe) and social status affect social tie activation.

I used a short screening questionnaire to purposively sample from all potential interviewees identified by the snowball sampling process (Table 7). In addition to basic demographic information, the screening interview revealed several important characteristics about the refugee. I limited the sample of refugees from the Sudan to individuals from the two most populous Sudanese tribes present in Portland (the Acholi and Azande tribes). During several pilot interviews, I asked Somali refugees to identify their clan, an important characteristic that structures Somali society, but after persistent refusals by Somali interviewees to self-identify clan I removed this question from the questionnaire. As a result, I did not require variation in clan for Somali refugees in the study, so I included fewer Somalis than Sudanese in the sample.

All interviewees could readily identify their sponsorship status and I classified refugees as elites or non-elites based on two factors. First, refugees may have self-identified as a leader in the refugee community. Most Sudanese leaders became leaders through a formal election process within their tribe or the wider Sudanese community. In contrast, Somalis involved in one of the non-profit organizations created to assist other Somalis in the resettlement process became de facto community leaders. A small number of Sudanese and Somalis who claimed leadership status simply viewed themselves as important spokespeople, or “elders,” for their community. Second, I also classified as elites those refugees who had obtained a good paying or prestigious job in Portland in comparison to their refugee peers. Elite refugees likely held a

superior position in the social structure compared to their peers because of their leadership or economic positions.

Table 7: Purposive sample of refugees

Country of Origin	Somalia				Sudan							
Clan/Tribe	All				Acholi				Azande			
Sponsorship	Sponsored		Non-Sponsored		Sponsored		Non-Sponsored		Sponsored		Non-Sponsored	
Status	Elite	Non-Elite	Elite	Non-Elite	Elite	Non-Elite	Elite	Non-Elite	Elite	Non-Elite	Elite	Non-Elite
# of Refugees Interviewed	3	4	5	4	3	4	5	2	5	5	1	1

Note: Individual interviews conducted by the author

If a potential interviewee passed the screening interview, I conducted a semi-structured interview with him or her that touched on multiple aspects of his or her resettlement and life in Portland. In this interview I asked refugees to describe their migration path to Portland; their daily routines and religious practices; the level of cohesiveness they experienced in their co-ethnic community in Portland compared to back home; and their employment experiences. The longest portion of the interview focused on the social networks of refugees in Portland and how refugees used their social networks when seeking help. I asked interviewees how they would arrange for temporary child care (if they had children), access information about employment (either a new job or upgrading existing employment), find a ride somewhere if their car was broken (or they did not have a car), and borrow a non-trivial amount of money (\$200) in an emergency. In their answers to these questions, refugees described their experiences with help provision by social ties, which social ties they activated given the need to access particular resources, and most importantly *why* they activated particular social ties.

All interviews took place between December 2005 and July 2006. Interviews lasted approximately one hour, but ranged from 30 minutes to three and one-half hours. Of the 42

interviews, I recorded 39 and transcribed them later to provide a written account of the interview. Using the grounded theoretic method, I analyzed the raw text of interview transcriptions by coding repeating ideas, identifying themes and constructing a theoretical narrative (Auerbach and Silverstein 2003).

A New Reality in Portland

Compared to their lives in their country of origin or a refugee camp, refugees found a new reality when they arrived in Portland. They began to realize that they needed access to transportation, consistent child care, formal employment, and financial capital in order to get ahead, much less get by in Portland. With the exception of some refugees from upper class backgrounds, most refugees in the sample had never owned a car and had little experience driving prior to coming to the U.S. While most refugees in the sample had a car or access to a car at the time of the interview, all of them had experienced situations when they needed a ride. Few refugees in the sample needed to pay for child care in their country of origin since most female refugees in the sample had not worked outside of their homes in their country of origin and assumed child care responsibilities. Prior to coming to the U.S., female refugees usually had informal arrangements with neighbors and relatives in place to assist them when they needed temporary child care. These arrangements continued to some degree in Portland, but many refugees relied on creative solutions between spouses who worked opposite shifts or used government subsidized child care from private providers to ensure child care.

Many refugees in the sample had little experience with formal employment prior to their arrival in Portland. Much of the government-funded support for refugees, such as cultural orientation and English language instruction, focuses on helping refugees get jobs (ORR 2004).

Despite this level of government support, many refugees in the sample used co-ethnic social ties to help them find their first and most recent jobs in Portland. As Table 8 shows, a substantial proportion of refugees in the sample used a co-ethnic tie to help find jobs, but, not surprisingly, sponsored refugees used co-ethnic ties more frequently than non-sponsored refugees. Also noteworthy, the proportion of refugees who applied for employment directly increased substantially between the first and most recent jobs that refugees worked.

Table 8: Search methods for first and most recent jobs among refugees in the sample, by sponsorship status

	Total (N=42)	Sponsored (N=24)	Non-sponsored (N=18)
Search method for first job			
Personal contact	47%	50%	45%
Co-ethnic contact	40%	50%	28%
Out-group contact	7%	0%	17%
Institutional resource	36%	33%	39%
Applied directly	10%	9%	11%
Never had a job	2%	0%	6%
No reply	5%	8%	0%
Search method for most recent job			
Personal contact	46%	51%	39%
Co-ethnic contact	36%	46%	22%
Out-group contact	10%	5%	17%
Institutional resource	7%	5%	11%
Applied directly	40%	38%	44%
Never had a job	2%	0%	6%
No reply	5%	8%	0%

Note: Individual interviews conducted by the author

Money took on an immensely important role in the lives of refugees, making it by far the biggest change for refugees in Portland compared to their countries of origin. One sponsored Sudanese man who had lived in Portland for five years explained the differences between money in the Sudan and in Portland:

Because there not everything is money – you can save your money and then keep it there...[but] if you don't have money you can stay and you can still eat food – you can get food from your farm. Here it is different, here everything is money. That's [what] we have learned.

Refugees were quick to point out the new reality they faced in Portland. In contrast to their lives in their countries of origin, refugees needed to earn money from employment to get by in their new context. Access to employment required reliable transportation and child care, making these resources interconnected for refugees. While the official resettlement organization and other social service providers helped them meet some of these new needs, refugees also turned to their social ties in Portland for help.

Constraints on Social Tie Activation

In thinking about which of their social ties to activate for help, refugees faced two clear constraints. First, at a time when they needed to access a variety of resources to help them get by in Portland, virtually all refugees in the sample perceived that the size of their social networks in Portland from which they could draw support had shrunk compared to the size of their networks in their countries of origin. Second, the contacts in a refugee's social network had relatively few surplus resources available. The combination of these factors squeezed the ability of refugees to rely on their social networks for assistance.

Because refugees leave their countries of origin under violent and chaotic circumstances, family members and friends that served as sources of support in the country of origin may no longer be alive or may not live in the same city or country, forcing refugees to recreate supportive social ties (Haines 1996; Shelley 2001). In Portland, sponsored refugees, and non-sponsored refugees who had lived in Portland for at least two years, usually had established

social networks upon which they could rely for support. They used existing social ties as platforms to build a new social network or, in the case of non-sponsored refugees, established new social ties over time. In contrast, non-sponsored refugees who had lived in Portland for less than two years had few, if any, social ties when they arrived in Portland and lacked enough time to establish new friendships that could offer valuable support.

As a second constraint for activating social ties, refugees realized that their social ties had few extra resources to share. One scarce resource was leisure time. In contrast to their countries of origin, where refugees had significant amounts of leisure time available to them, new responsibilities in Portland dramatically reduced the amount of leisure time for most refugees. Virtually all refugees acknowledged that a lack of leisure time constrained the ability of co-ethnics to help as they had in their countries of origin. A non-sponsored Somali man who had lived in Portland for seven years explained how this lack of time to help was initially met with anger and frustration by newly arrived refugees who had yet to understand the “new rules” in place.

R: Back home, if someone asks you for assistance and you refuse, they take it as an insult. But here, they are learning the hard way. I have no time, I’m going to work. So, now they accept that, this man cannot help you now, or he cannot talk to you more because he is going to work.

I: Do you find that people are offended at first?

R: Yes, only when they get jobs and they have no time do they understand (laughter) – it takes them awhile.

In addition to time, refugees also found money in short supply. For example, one sponsored Somali woman who had lived in Portland for almost five years confided that “Here everybody is on their own and getting a job, and protecting their own money. Because they are

trying to help everyone back home too.” This case highlights the fact that refugees faced a series of network obligations that included providing for their immediate families and remitting money to relatives and friends back home, leaving little money to share with other members of their social network.

Faced with new and intense needs in Portland, refugees had small and resource poor social networks upon which to draw support. This new reality differed significantly from their experiences in their countries of origin, where refugees remembered facing familiar needs and had social networks that could provide assistance when necessary. Refugees learned through experience in Portland that scarcity of leisure time and money among members of their social networks changed whom they could and should ask for assistance. This resulted in a shift in norms that governed social tie activation among refugees. The next section describes these norms and indicates how refugees used them to help decide which social ties to activate when they needed assistance.

A Mental Model of Social Tie Activation

Refugees operated under the principle of maximizing self-interest when activating social ties. Not surprisingly, they placed a premium on understanding which of their social ties had access to a needed resource and which would grant them access to the needed resource. In keeping with findings from previous research, refugees pointed out that the type of relationship they had with their social ties helped to determine which social tie they activated for assistance (Kana'laupuni et al. 2005). Generally, refugees had confidence in activating social ties with whom they had close relationships and established trust, reflecting a belief that these ties would provide access to a needed resource.

While this process initially seemed straight-forward, refugees reacted to scarce resources among their social ties and patterned social tie activation in ways that preserved their dignity and acknowledged appropriate and inappropriate justifications for needing assistance. As a result, they differentiated between the types of resources they needed to access, following a different social tie activation path to access monetary and non-monetary resources. Refugees were willing to activate a variety of co-ethnic and out-group social ties to access non-monetary resources, such as employment information and a ride. Refugees asked a variety of co-ethnics to help with informal child care, though they paid attention to why they needed access to child care when selecting a social tie to activate.

Refugees became much more discriminating when determining which social ties they would activate to access monetary resources, carefully weighing their need for money with the reason they needed money and the shame and a resulting fear of gossip that accompanied borrowing money. Elite refugees had particularly hard times borrowing money and looking for employment since they hesitated to activate co-ethnic social ties in inferior positions in the social structure. This resulted in elite refugees activating out-group social ties to a greater extent than non-elite refugees when they needed to borrow money and look for work. Together, these factors bounded the rationality of refugees, shaping their notions of self-interest, the social norms governing how refugees requested assistance, and, as a result, their social tie activation decisions.

“It is shameful to ask money all the time from other people”

While refugees considered the type of relationship that they had with their social ties when making social tie activation decisions, they also acknowledged that scarcity among these

social ties was important and encouraged them to think differently about activating ties to access monetary and non-monetary resources. Despite limitations in leisure time required for providing non-monetary resources, refugees perceived those resources as much easier to provide than monetary resources. From their perspective, the amount of time necessary to give someone a ride, watch a neighbor's child, or help find a job was significantly less burdensome than asking for money that was usually in short supply. For example, even with the price of gasoline at a high level during the time of the interviews, refugees were confident that, if their social ties had a car and the time, they could ask for a ride from co-ethnic and out-group social ties without much worry. As one sponsored Sudanese man who had lived in Portland for seven years related:

Well, for us Sudanese, it work easy. You just call any closest Sudanese whose phone number you have. For the help in the Sudanese community, it is still the way that we had back home...for instance, if your car broke down and you work in a company with a Sudanese – they gonna volunteer to pick you up every morning. And sometimes, they might not ask you for the gas [money].

Refugees had similar experiences with arranging informal child care. Many refugees mentioned a common practice of dropping their children off with neighbors, relatives and close friends when they needed to go somewhere without their children, though in every case these social ties were co-ethnics. It was not uncommon for this type of arrangement to be unspoken – as long as their social ties were home and had time, refugees did not feel they needed to ask these social ties if they could watch their children for a brief time. As one sponsored Somali man who had lived in Portland for almost 12 years explained the standing arrangement his wife arranged for temporary child care:

It depends – sometimes she call relative, sometimes she calls a friend, like her best friend. We do that everyday, you know, a lady who works in this school – she can't afford a babysitter and she doesn't want to lose her job here, so she asks

us to hold her daughter every day. And we do that. We don't judge her, we don't judge her anything for it. So we have a open social service to each other.

Finally, refugees were willing to ask virtually any of their employed co-ethnic and out-group social ties for help looking for employment, though refugees had more co-ethnic social ties than out-group social ties, so they relied on co-ethnic social ties for employment assistance more frequently.

In contrast, most refugees described a significantly narrower group of social ties they could activate for the purpose of borrowing money. When asked why they felt so constrained when activating social ties to borrow money, refugees had several explanations. They quickly pointed out that compared to back home, there were different expectations regarding paying back borrowed money in the U.S. Thus, the role of cultural norms and how these norms shifted between their countries of origin and Portland clearly played a role in how refugees chose to activate social ties to access money. Previous anthropological research shows that gifting is culturally regulated (Mauss 1954). Borrowed money that might be considered a gift back home was expected to be repaid in the U.S. because of the increased importance of money in this context. As one non-sponsored Sudanese man who had lived in Portland for about two and a half years explained, "If we are from Sudan, you know some guy, you won't give the money back with him. He say, 'Don't take care of that, I don't need that money any more.' But here, you borrow money, you have to pay him back."

One important exception was money borrowed from family members. Refugees reported that their family members lent money when asked, but frequently refused repayment, considering the act of lending money a family obligation. One sponsored Sudanese man who had lived in

Portland for five years explained the difference between borrowing from friends and family-members.

Because in our culture, when I give you money, I should give it as a help for you, not that you should pay it back. Since we live now in a different culture, and we know that everything depends on money, there is nothing you can get without money, so we are also getting to learn that habit of borrowing and then giving it back even if from relatives. But you can't borrow money from your relatives. You just go and ask, "If you have some money, please, I need help." If there are many, if you have brothers and sisters, they will just contribute without you giving it back to them. That is how it works.

Many refugees, but especially younger males eager to demonstrate independence from their families, described their discomfort in borrowing money from family-members since family-members were likely to refuse attempts to repay the money. This was an unacceptable outcome for some refugees who increasingly understood the importance of money in the American context. Instead of activating family members to borrow money, these individuals borrowed from non-family members. As one non-sponsored Somali man who had lived in Portland for six years explained, "But you know the family is - when they give you [money] they will not expect to pay them back. So we're kind of, you know, we don't want to do that, so we kind of go to our friends because then we can pay them back."

Refugees thought of borrowing money as different from seeking non-monetary resources because, unlike asking for a ride, child care or employment information, they associated borrowing money with shame and failure. However, refugees who found themselves in the desperate situation of needing money constructed ways of maintaining dignity. Above all, refugees did their best to keep themselves out of the position of needing to borrow money. For example, one elite non-sponsored Somali woman who had lived in Portland for nine years described what would happen if she borrowed money from a social tie in the Somali community.

R: Maybe it's my own personal feeling, but one of the things that I pray for is, "God, I hope I never need them." You know? I don't want to be in a position where I am - I don't want to be weak...because they will destroy me.

I: What will they say?

R: A lot of emotional things. It might look trivial to the average American, Westerner. But in the Somali communities, and in many third world countries, reputation is everything. Because I'm a woman working on this scale and I'm not depending on anyone. And I'm single, so they expect me to be married, have babies, and be at home. If I'm not that, you know, I'm a whore. Literally. So they can destroy you emotionally.

Never borrowing money was unrealistic for many refugees who barely had enough money to pay their monthly expenses and had little savings to fall back on in case of an emergency. Therefore, when refugees had to borrow money, they limited their social tie activation to those whom they trusted most. They reasoned that by limiting their social tie activation to close friends and relatives when borrowing money, they could protect their reputations from damage in the wider community. For example, one sponsored Somali woman who had lived in Portland for four years described her experience borrowing money as follows:

Example, I am broke, I want to borrow some money from some person. Since I am Somali, and Somali it is shameful to ask money all the time from other people, but if you don't have anything, and you need...it depends on the person you are going to ask. I am not going door-by-door and everyone I know – only my close ones.

Other refugees worried about the potential damage to their reputations that gossip regarding borrowing money could cause to such an extent, that they elected to borrow money from out-group social ties. Generally, only elite refugees in the sample had the necessary out-group social ties to pursue this strategy. For example, an elite sponsored Sudanese woman who

had lived in Portland for eight years and established a number of out-group social ties explained how she approached borrowing money.

R: But borrowing money shows failure – there is that kind of feelings. You become self-conscious about who you ask for money. Because people will say, “Oh, you are not careful with money.”

I: Would it be easier to ask [someone outside your tribe] or a non-Sudanese?

R: Yeah, for them to do that – it is better to ask a non-Sudanese. And if you are asking [Sudanese], people tend to look at you and, “Why is she - she is capable, she can work – why keep on borrowing?” People want to keep that name, don’t want to be seen as a failure.

This feeling was not universal among refugees with established out-group social ties.

One non-elite sponsored Sudanese man who had lived in Portland for one year befriended a wealthy American mentor who became an important source of support in his life. As the following conversation shows, this mentor provided some non-monetary things, but the Sudanese man drew the line at borrowing money.

R: Borrow money? No, I wouldn’t ask her.

I: Why not?

R: You know, she used to do so many things. Like boots for soccer, uniform for soccer. [My mentor] is the one who bought for me. Borrowing money isn’t fair to ask. For other things, immediately she may give me. Sometimes, when we don’t have food here, because we spent the money on the rent, she will come and take me to the store and she will buy.

Faced with changing norms, including the need to repay loans, refugees activated social ties in a way that minimized damage to their reputations and preserved as much dignity as possible despite the often desperate situations in which they found themselves. They accomplished this by acknowledging new norms governing exchange, distinguishing between

monetary and non-monetary resources, and adjusting their social tie activation decisions accordingly. However, as the next section shows, social status placed another level of complexity on social tie activation decisions.

“I sometimes won’t ask [Sudanese] for help - they ask me for help”

Elite and non-elite refugees thought about tie activation differently. Non-elites tended to follow the established norm of seeking assistance from those they perceived were in positions to help them, frequently relying on elite refugees for assistance. On the other hand, in order to maintain their dignity, elite refugees usually chose to activate social ties of equal status when they needed assistance. Because there are fewer elites than non-elites in the refugee community in Portland, they felt the squeeze of a shrunken and resource poor social network even more than non-elite refugees. As a result, elites believed that most of the assistance they needed was best found among out-group social ties. One sponsored Somali man who considered himself a leader in the Somali community used a metaphor from Somali culture to describe this dilemma:

In Somali culture, they say...before you die, when you are laying down, your kids will read to you some verses of Qur’an, it is called [Surah] Yasin. They say where there is only one Sheik, one person who knows this [Surah] Yasin, when it comes to him, no one will recite the [Surah] Yasin to him. When they say it in Somali, it rhymes and makes a lot [of] sense (laughter). So if you are the only person who knows religion, when you are in need and you are laying down, no one will help you. So they make this saying to emphasize the importance to have same class with people. I feel sometimes in that spot...So it is like, kind of like, when I need someone, it would be better if I could get inside the community. Like I was talking to you about [your university] and how I can do my PhD there – there is no one in my community I can talk to about this...I would be very happy if I had a lot of Somalis who are in better positions than me.

At the same time, elite refugees sometimes found themselves in a position of needing assistance that their non-elite counterparts could provide. However, because of the engrained

expectation that assistance flows from elites to non-elites, they had a difficult time bringing themselves to ask non-elite co-ethnics for assistance. As one elite Sudanese man explained:

R: I think that it is very difficult when you are the first people here. When you paved the way for everybody. Most people don't think that I need help, but sometimes I do need help. I think that it is also difficult for me to ask for help.

I: Why is that?

R: I don't know (laughter).

I: Is it difficult for you to ask for help from anyone?

R: I can ask you for help and I sometimes won't ask [Sudanese] for help - they ask me for help. So I have to find somebody else to ask. (laughter)

He went on to explain how he uses out-group social ties to help him look for jobs outside of Maine and abroad, but acknowledged that he could rely on older co-ethnic social ties to provide him with advice. He reasoned that receiving this type of support would not result in a loss of dignity since his elite status did not necessarily mean he had more wisdom than some of the elders in the community.

Because of their roles as spokespeople for their communities and the greater likelihood that they held higher status jobs that allowed them to mix with out-group populations, elite refugees had more opportunities to meet out-group social ties than their non-elite counterparts. At the same time, elite refugees may have felt *pulled* to establish relationships with out-group social ties in order to take advantage of the increased benefits associated with having out-group social ties. Another possibility suggested by this research is that their inability to rely on co-ethnic social ties for assistance *pushed* elite refugees to establish relationships with out-group social ties. Whatever the reason for having out-group social ties, elite refugees believed that

reversing the norm that elites helped non-elites would damage their dignity. As a result, elite refugees often activated out-group social ties when they needed assistance.

“Who will watch the children when you go everywhere?”

Refugees paid attention to *why* they sought the resource as they decided which social ties to activate. With a heightened sensitivity to the scarcity of time and money, refugees determined “good” and “bad” reasons for wanting a particular resource. For example, one non-sponsored Somali woman who had lived in Portland for three years had a running informal agreement with her neighbor regarding child care. Each woman felt comfortable dropping off her children at the other’s house when they needed to step out. However, there was an unspoken agreement in place about what constituted an acceptable reason to go out. Socializing with friends, a perfectly acceptable reason for many Americans to get a babysitter or ask a friend to watch their children, was not acceptable. When asked why she did not arrange child care so that she could socialize with friends, she explained:

R: Who will watch the children when you go everywhere? You know that?
America is expensive, Somalia, everything is free.

I: Maybe your friend could watch the kids when you go?

R: That’s not good. You children, they stay at another friend’s, you go cinema.
It is not good!

I: Why?

R: When I go to important things, like school, like job, like for example, appointment, that’s okay, because you have to have, you do. But you go to cinema, you go theater and get another person to watch (makes the disapproving sound “tsk, tsk, tsk”). I’m not happy like this. I don’t like this, because I’m worried when I go that my children is without reason – only cinema.

Even asking for a ride required a good reason, because it meant asking for time from whichever social tie could give a ride. One sponsored Sudanese woman who had lived in Portland for about five years described why she preferred to walk instead of ask for a ride when she needed to go somewhere.

R: Sometimes it's hard here to call someone to ask for help. I used to walk.
Only if the weather is bad, I don't walk.

I: So you prefer to walk if you have to go somewhere rather than ask someone for a ride?

R: Yes.

I: Why is that? Is it because you don't want to put too much trouble on them?

R: Some of them are working, some of them are busy, I don't bother them. It's better for me to walk.

Refugees considered the justification for needing to borrow money as particularly important in determining social tie activation. For example, one non-sponsored Somali man who had been in Portland for seven years described a typical reason that other Somalis would feel was legitimate for borrowing money.

I: What determines the trust?

R: His behavior and the reason that he wants the money for. Like...a man who is younger than me who works more hours than I do, comes to me and says give me \$300 in two weeks I will pay you and so on. He may tell you that [his] father is in Addis Ababa and he is sick, he needs some money and he needs cash now.

The need for an appropriate justification prior to activating a social tie reflected the anticipation among refugees that social ties would judge them based on why they needed access

to a resource. For example, the female Somali refugee refused to ask for child care so she could socialize with friends because she worried that her friend would consider her a bad mother, gossip that would surely find its way through the community. On the other hand, the example of a young Somali man who needed to send money to help pay for medical care for his sick father had a reason that probably enhanced his reputation among the Somali community as a hard working, dutiful son. So, the need for an appropriate justification could determine whether social tie activation occurred or not.

Refugees also used justifications as a guide for which social tie to activate. For example, a non-sponsored Sudanese man who had lived in Portland for one year reasoned that asking his relatives for money was likely to cause arguments, so he activated other social ties when he needed to borrow money. The following dialogue illustrates this tension.

I: Could you ask your relatives [for the money]?

R: Relatives? Yes, sometimes, but I don't ask them.

I: Why not?

R: (Audible sigh and long pause) Because you know, family together, sometimes you fear, I don't know why. In our family, sometimes you fear to ask for things from the family. Instead you ask from your friends.

I: Is it because they don't have the money?

R: They have sometime money, but I myself, I don't expect to go and beg from them. Instead, I use friend, you know? Because a friend is easy sometimes – it is easy to talk to a friend. Like, “Oh...I am broke today. Could you give me \$5 and I will pay you in two days?” Just like that. But for the parent, “Today I don't have money.” And then, sometimes, there is a lot of argument. For me the friend is easier.

I: What is the argument?

R: They say, “You ask money for what?” Say, “I want to go and buy this.” For them, you have to keep money for other things, not just to buy things like that.

When you ask somebody, they may talk a lot, which means they don't have the intention to give me the money. Sometimes, I don't want to ask. But friend is okay, if you are the same age it is okay and very easy.

As this dialogue indicates, refugees understood the economic circumstances of their social ties and recognized that even very close social ties like family members were unlikely to provide access to monetary resources if there was not a true emergency to justify the request. Therefore, refugees chose to activate social ties that would likely provide resources based on the justification for needing the resource.

Discussion

Despite institutional resources in place to assist refugees during resettlement in the U.S., the significant needs they experience and the ambitious expectations regarding how long their self-sufficiency should take usually results in refugees seeking informal assistance from their social networks. The new circumstances refugees find in the U.S. require that they adjust their expectations of what kind of assistance to request and from whom to request it. Refugees consider which of their social ties are able and willing to provide assistance given a particular need, but they minimize potential damage to their reputations by activating social ties that are unlikely to spread gossip about them. As a result, refugees activate social ties in varied ways depending upon their place in the social structure and whether they need monetary or non-monetary resources. In addition, refugees activate social ties that will recognize their justifications for needing a resource as legitimate and supply access to the needed resource without a corresponding negative personal judgment.

These research findings hold implications for theory and practice. As Lin (2001b) has pointed out, taking advantage of social capital requires action and choice on the part of those

who need assistance. To the extent that it has focused on social tie activation, prior research suggests that individuals use a logic guided by self interest to choose which of their social ties to activate. In other words, when faced with a need to access a particular resource, individuals consider which of their social ties are able and willing to provide access to the resource, and, of these potential social ties, activate whichever one can provide the resource most effectively and efficiently with the least amount of reciprocity required.

The social tie activation practices of refugees reveal a significantly more complicated picture. Similar to low-wage inner city workers (Newman 1999) or working-class men (Lamont 2000), refugees attempt to maintain a dignified self when activating social ties. As a result, stigmas associated with needing certain kinds of assistance and exacerbated by social status differentials among refugees helped to steer refugees toward activating some social ties and away from activating others. In addition, refugees realized that their social ties judge them during the activation process according to why they need the resource. Like the effect of stigmas, different justifications helped to determine which social ties a refugee activated.

In this case, an over-emphasis on earnings when conceptualizing the utility maximization function that refugees use for determining social tie activation leads to only a partial explanation of this process. A more complete and nuanced conceptualization of this utility maximization function uses insights from social psychology and cultural sociology. These fields focus on social relationships and the dynamics of social settings that supply a context for the creation and use of social capital. In other words, they help us understand how factors inherent to social relationships shape the self-interested motivations at the heart of social tie activation decisions. This research finding is an important addition to the social capital literature because it suggests

that access to social capital does not guarantee its uniform use, and gives us some insight into how individuals make decisions regarding their use of social capital.

Like previous work from Stack (1974) and Menjivar (2000), my research findings confirm the idea that social norms in particular cultures and contexts shape social tie activation decisions. The most important finding is that resettled refugees in the U.S. activate social ties with an eye toward maintaining a dignified self. Smith's (forthcoming) recent work on defensive individualism also confirms this idea, but represents an extreme case. For example, Smith found that many unemployed poor African Americans were reluctant to ask for or accept job finding assistance from employed social ties because they felt that they would not be able to fulfill the expectations of their social ties and they did not want to be perceived as failures by their peers. As a result they looked for work in a fiercely independent fashion. Refugees, who brought to the U.S. social norms that acknowledged the importance of individual and group efforts in finding solutions to everyday problems, do not share this defensive individualism characteristic. To be sure, refugees strove for self-sufficiency, but they also believed that seeking multiple kinds of assistance from social ties was acceptable so long as they observed certain parameters that allowed them to maintain their dignity in the face of requesting assistance. Only in rare cases did this pursuit for dignity preclude the use of social capital; more often it merely shaped decisions regarding its use.

My research findings also have an important policy implication for refugee resettlement practice. Refugees may have social ties that possess needed resources, but they wait too long to activate these social ties because of complex social norms that shape their self-interest and dissuade this action. For example, an important impediment to refugee self-sufficiency is access to emergency financial capital. Since many refugees live from paycheck to paycheck and have

little if any savings, even minor emergencies, like getting into a car accident, can upset their fragile budgets and start a chain of events that leads to difficulty keeping a job and problems paying bills. Though more formal rotating credit arrangements are a notable exception (Bonacich 1973), assuming that refugees will easily and quickly access informal credit through their social networks to help with these types of emergencies may be unrealistic because of stigmas attached to this action.

Following this reasoning, perhaps the simplest policy suggestion is to enhance federal support for all refugees, but especially those refugees who arrive in the U.S. in particularly needy positions. For example, refugees who come to the U.S. lacking any formal education and the ability to speak English are at a distinct disadvantage in the increasingly skills-based U.S. labor market. In the past, the U.S. refugee resettlement program guaranteed refugees up to 36 months of cash assistance, giving these refugees enough time to improve their ability to speak English and learn valuable job skills. Today this cash assistance lasts for a maximum of eight months. In comparison, most refugees in Canada receive up to 12 months of cash assistance and some special needs refugees receive cash assistance for as long as 36 months. For many refugees who lack important skills, the U.S. safety net is insufficient and leaves them vulnerable to future financial emergencies that seriously constrain their ability to succeed in the economy. The increased costs of longer up front support for refugees would be more than offset by reduced costs to other parts of the welfare system that are burdened by refugees who experience serious crises when their refugee-specific benefits expire before they are capable of providing for themselves. With change to immigration policy in the U.S. looming, but focused almost exclusively on undocumented immigrants and border security, refugee advocates should work to place increased benefits for refugees on the agenda.

Chapter 4: The Bonding and Bridging Roles of Religious Institutions for Refugees

Introduction

The religious characteristics of recent immigrants in the U.S. have diversified the American religious landscape. To date, the majority of post-1965 immigrants in the U.S. have come from Latin America and the Caribbean, but large percentages have also come from Asia, the Middle East and Africa (Foner, Rumbaut and Gold 2000). Among recent immigrants, almost 20 percent follow a non-Judeo-Christian religious tradition (like Islam, Hinduism or Buddhism), a proportion almost four times that found in the native-born population (Jasso et al. 2003). About two-thirds of recent immigrants are Christian, but many of these immigrants have brought Christian religious traditions with them that differ in subtle and dramatic ways from the current practice of Christianity in the U.S. (Hagan 1994; Wellmeier 1998). In response to these immigrants, the nature of Christianity has shifted to better reflect the imported practices of Christian immigrants (Kwon, Ebaugh and Hagan 1997; Warner and Wittner 1998), and minority religious traditions like Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam have become increasingly important in the U.S. (Wuthnow 2005).

Despite the increased religious diversity of the U.S., little research investigates how majority (Judeo-Christian) and minority (non-Judeo-Christian) religious traditions contribute to varied assimilation outcomes for immigrants. In particular, the arrival of large numbers of immigrants from minority religious traditions raises an important question about how the assimilation experiences of these immigrants compares to the experiences of immigrants who are part of majority religious traditions in the U.S. (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). In the past, Catholic and Jewish immigrants from Europe also increased the religious diversity of the U.S. (Herberg

1955) but, this range of diversity pales in comparison to the wide variety of religions that immigrants from all over the world have now introduced to the U.S.

Widespread anxiety in Western Europe and North America concerning the spread of Islam, and Islamic extremists in particular, highlights the importance of the assimilation question for Muslim immigrants (Collyer 2005; Zolberg and Woon 1999). For example, recent public opinion polls reveal that almost half of Americans consider Islam a fanatical religion and about 40 percent consider it a violent religion (Wuthnow 2005, p. 216). According to the same survey, only about 25 percent of Americans consider Hinduism or Buddhism fanatical and approximately 15 percent consider these religions violent. The September 11th terrorist attacks in the U.S. almost certainly aggravated the negative attitudes toward Islam, but “Orientalism,” the idea that discourses in Western civilizations privilege Western societies over “Arab” societies, also conditioned these attitudes (Said 1978). Despite recent evidence that many immigrant Muslims in the U.S. have entered the middle class (Kohut and Logo 2007), with these kinds of hostile attitudes in place in the U.S., Muslim immigrants may find assimilation more difficult than immigrants from majority religious traditions or even immigrants from other minority religious traditions.

Historically, two arguments have emerged concerning the role of religion in immigrant assimilation, with one side suggesting that adherence to religion hinders assimilation and the other side arguing that religion helps assimilation (Cadge and Ecklund 2006). Contemporary scholars have found evidence that religion serves dual bonding and bridging roles for immigrants. Among scholars interested in the concept of social capital, these terms usually describe types of social ties and the different kinds of assistance they provide, with bonding ties helping individuals “get by,” and bridging ties helping individuals “get ahead” (Briggs 1998).

In this paper, the terms bonding and bridging represent more than different types of friendship ties and the types of assistance they provide. In particular, bonding suggests the reinforcement of a certain boundary. For example, religion may play a bonding role in the lives of immigrants by reaffirming ethnic or cultural identities through the practice of familiar rituals and the maintenance of a transnational connection (Hirschman 2004; Levitt 2003). Bonding supplies stability to the lives of refugees. On the other hand, bridging suggests the transcendence of different boundaries. For example, religion may play a bridging role in the lives of immigrants by conceptually and practically connecting them to the wider American society and culture, helping them assimilate (Hirschman 2004). Bridging and bonding only have meaning when considering salient group boundaries, such as race, class, gender, or country of origin. (Lamont and Molnar 2002). Both bonding and bridging have the potential to open the doors to various types of aid or influence. However, following the logic of social capital scholars who distinguish the aid from bonding and bridging social ties (Briggs 1998), the aid or influence associated with bridging is likely superior to that associated with bonding.

The finding in prior research that religion can play a bonding and bridging role for immigrants may have been driven in part by the focus and location of prior research. With few exceptions, studies of new immigrants and religion have focused on ethnic or mono-lingual, multi-ethnic congregations in traditional immigrant receiving areas of immigrants in the U.S., such as Los Angeles, New York, and Houston, that I will call “gateway areas,” following conventional use of the term (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000b; Warner and Wittner 1998). This is entirely reasonable, since the majority of post-1965 immigrants live in a gateway area, are part of a majority religious tradition, and worship in one of these types of congregations. By definition,

gateway areas have large, established immigrant populations, and are likely to have well developed majority and minority religious institutions.

However, changes in recent immigrant settlement patterns and the religious backgrounds of immigrants suggest the need for a fresh look at the role of religion in immigrant assimilation. Specifically, immigrants increasingly settle in non-gateway areas, such as smaller cities, suburbs and rural areas (Singer 2004), and are part of a minority religious tradition (Jasso et al. 2003). In comparison to gateway areas, non-gateway areas generally have smaller, less diverse immigrant populations; fledgling or non-existent minority religious institutions; and a receiving context that is less accustomed to diversity. With these differences in mind, it is unclear how well previous research on religion and immigrants has captured the experiences of immigrants in non-gateway areas. In addition, scholars know little about how the assimilation experiences of immigrants from minority and majority religious traditions differ, much less how they differ in non-gateway areas.

In response to these gaps in our understanding of recent immigrants and religion, this paper answers the following research question. Do the functions of religious institutions differ for immigrants who are part of majority and minority religious traditions in non-gateway areas? To answer this question, this paper focuses on the religious activities of Christian Sudanese and Muslim Somali refugees in Portland, Maine. This comparison of refugees from majority and minority religious traditions is imperfect since it does not control for historical and contextual differences between Somalis and Sudanese. A preferable comparison would have been refugees from minority and majority religious traditions from the same country of origin living in the same city (for example Chen 2002). Still, this comparative case study helps us to understand

how refugees from different religious traditions use their religious institutions after they arrive in the U.S.

Refugees, a subset of immigrants who flee their countries of origin because of persecution, are a compelling and critical case to use to help answer this question for two reasons (King, Keohane and Verba 1994). First, religion sometimes plays a role in the persecution of refugees in their countries of origin, resulting in their decision to come to the U.S. This is particularly true for refugees who practice Christianity, a minority religion in many originating countries for refugees, but a majority religion in the U.S. Therefore, religion may be a particularly salient issue in the lives of resettled refugees, providing a powerful window in which to view their adjustment experiences (Shandy and Fennelly 2006). Second, since they come from conflict-ridden areas, death or distance frequently separates refugees from many of their friends and loved ones. As a result, and to a greater extent than other types of immigrants, refugees must rebuild some or all of their social networks when they arrive in the U.S. (Shelley 2001). As one of the few familiar institutions that they experience when they arrive in the U.S., religious institutions play a significant role in how refugees rebuild their social networks and maintain their cultural traditions, and where they seek assistance. Therefore, religious institutions may play a prominent role in the lives of many refugees, even those who are not particularly religious.

Research findings from this study suggest that in a non-gateway area like Portland, affiliation with a majority or minority religious tradition plays an important role in determining the functions of religious institutions in the lives of religiously active refugees. Catholic Sudanese refugees in Portland have the flexibility of worshipping in a well established multi-ethnic congregation, an ethnic congregation or both. For Catholic Sudanese refugees, churches

have bridging and bonding functions. In contrast, Muslim Somali refugees in Portland worship in a newly founded, Somali-dominated mosque that exists in isolation from other community institutions. In other words, this research indicates that religious institutions have the potential to help refugees bond within and bridge across tribal, national, and religious boundaries. Therefore, contrary to the outcomes predicted by prior research based in gateway areas, in a non-gateway area religious institutions may play primarily a bonding role for refugees of a minority religious tradition.

I organize the remainder of this paper as follows. The first section reviews relevant literature focused on the functions of religious institutions for immigrants in the U.S. and develops a set of competing research hypotheses. The second section introduces the methods and data used in this study. The third section places my data in the local context of Portland, Maine and the larger political contexts of the conflicts that created refugees from the Sudan and Somalia. The fourth section describes the different functions that religious institutions played in the lives of Sudanese and Somali refugees in Portland. Finally, a fifth section discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the research findings.

The Functions of Religious Institutions in the Lives of Immigrants

Religion plays a central role in the lives of many new immigrants in the U.S. Findings from the New Immigrant Survey-Pilot, a detailed survey of new immigrants in the U.S., indicate that almost half of new immigrants in the U.S. attend a religious institution nearly every week or more (Cadge and Ecklund 2006). In fact, some evidence suggests that immigrants become more religious after they have immigrated to the U.S. (Hirschman 2004). In many ways, these findings echo findings from prior research that specified the important and constant role that

religion plays in the life of immigrants in the U.S. For example, early research on immigrants and religion found that the assimilation process changed many of the cultural practices of first generation immigrants, but did little to change religious affiliation, even for the first and subsequent generations of immigrants who belonged to minority religious traditions (Gordon 1964; Herberg 1955; but see Mol 1971). In other words, religion is an important and enduring aspect of immigrants' lives in the U.S.

The staying power of religious traditions suggests that they may play a major role in how immigrants assimilate in the U.S. Immigrant religious institutions frequently act as congregation based community centers, where immigrants fill not only their spiritual needs, but also some of their social needs (Bankston and Zhou 2000; Hirschman 2004; Yang and Ebaugh 2001b). For example, participation in religious institutions allows immigrants to engage in familiar religious rituals, speak their native language, maintain a transnational identity, and build valuable social networks among other immigrants (Greely 1997; Levitt 2003; Min 1992). Similar to one of its roles in the African American community (Ellison and Sherkat 1995), religious institutions help immigrants bond by giving them an environment where they can reclaim lost dignity through the creation of a status hierarchy based on religiosity and leadership positions within a house of worship (Bankston and Zhou 2000). All of these activities meet the definition of bonding since they reinforce an immigrant's national or ethnic identity.

However, the bonding effect of immigrant religious institutions has generational, ethnic, and linguistic limits. As Mol observed, religion offers first generation immigrants the chance to immerse themselves in "security-giving behaviour patterns" (1971, p. 63). In contrast, second generation immigrants who have adopted the language and customs of the receiving country may rebel against certain tenets of the religious traditions found in their parents' church (Chai 1998;

Chen 2006). Further, immigrants who share a religious tradition but come from various countries of origin frequently worship in different ways. In some cases this may initiate conversations regarding these differences and a desire to find the truly correct way to worship (Badr 2000). In other cases, this may create disputes that divide the congregation along ethnic lines (Abusharaf 1998; Wellmeier 1998). Similarly, immigrants who share a religious tradition but not a language complicate the bonding role of religion for immigrants. In these situations, churches may offer religious services in the language known to most members of the congregation or splinter the congregation into common language groups with different religious services, usually creating tension in both cases (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000a; Stevens 2004). In summary, the bonding role of religious institutions seems to be most effective when immigrants share generational, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds (Yang 1998).

Despite prior findings that religious institutions are famously segregated by race in the U.S. (Chaves 2004), religious institutions can play a bridging role for new immigrants. On one hand, this bridging may be conceptual, as when religious activity helps immigrants transition from thinking of themselves as a national group to more of an ethnic group in the U.S. (Bankston and Zhou 1996; Kurien 1998). On the other hand, this bridging may be instrumental, as religious institutions connect immigrants to American culture and traditions through access to resources offered by their houses of worship, such as English classes, that help immigrants transcend their immigrant identity (Guest 2003). As incubators of social capital (Greely 1997), religious institutions also help immigrants diversify and strengthen their social networks, leading to increased access to information about jobs and other important aspects of their local contexts that can help them get ahead (Bankston and Zhou 1996). Immigrants who worship at multi-ethnic

congregations that include native born individuals may be particularly well positioned to create out-group social networks that are helpful because of their diversity (Stanczak 2006).

The majority of existing studies focused on immigrants and religion fail to systematically compare the effect of different types of religious traditions on immigrants (Cadge and Ecklund 2006). Two notable exceptions are case studies that compare public engagement activities by Chinese Christian and Buddhist congregations in gateway areas (Chen 2002; Yang and Ebaugh 2001a). These studies consistently found that Chinese Buddhists had more success in attracting native-born individuals to join their congregations because their exoticism appealed to Americans. In comparison, Chinese Christians failed to attract native born individuals because native born Christians had too many other churches to choose from where they did not perceive language and culture to be barriers. Therefore, while religious institutions may play both a bonding and bridging role for recent immigrants, previous research findings suggest that immigrants from minority religious traditions will use their religious institutions more successfully as bridges than immigrants from majority religious traditions.

In general, previous studies of immigrants and religion focused on gateway areas instead of non-gateway areas. These areas differ in significant ways that could affect how religious institutions function for immigrants (Singer 2004). One important difference is that native-born residents in gateway areas usually have more positive attitudes toward immigrants than those in non-gateway areas (De Jong and Tran 2001; Fennelly forthcoming). This difference in attitudes may make it more difficult for immigrants in non-gateway areas to use the bridging functions of community-based institutions, including religious institutions. At the same time, the negative attitudes of native-born residents toward immigrants in non-gateway areas may enhance the role of immigrant religious institutions as a sanctuary, strengthening the potential bonding function of

these institutions for immigrants. In addition, non-gateway areas often lack a critical mass of immigrants or immigrants with the material resources necessary to establish a vibrant, fully-functioning immigrant religious congregation. This is especially true for refugees, since, compared to other types of immigrants, refugees typically have less access to the financial resources necessary to start or support a thriving religious institution. This suggests that, in non-gateway areas, refugees from majority religious traditions are likely to join existing congregations, while refugees from minority religious traditions are likely to establish independent, but resource poor houses of worship.

To my knowledge, only one piece of research has examined how an immigrant's religious tradition (majority or minority) helps to determine the function of religious institutions for immigrants in non-gateway areas (Shandy and Fennelly 2006). This study found that majority religious institutions help immigrants adapt to their new homes better than minority religious institutions. Since this research finding is based on an analysis of data gathered from focus groups in one rural area of Minnesota, it should probably be treated as exploratory. Therefore, I have developed a series of competing research hypotheses based on a wider swatch of prior research findings. The first hypothesis, following the bulk of findings from prior research, is that religious institutions will provide bonding and bridging functions for immigrants living in non-gateway areas, regardless of their religious affiliation. The second hypothesis, in keeping with prior research that compares the role of religious institutions for immigrants from majority and minority religious traditions, is that immigrants from minority religious traditions will primarily have success using their religious institutions for bridging while immigrants from majority religious traditions will primarily have success using their religious institutions for bonding.

A third competing hypothesis, based on the findings from Shandy and Fennelly (2006), is that in a non-gateway area, refugees from a majority religion will use religious institutions primarily for bridging, while their minority religion counter-parts will use religious institutions primarily for bonding. This hypothesis suggests that native-born residents in non-gateway areas respond more positively to refugees with whom they share a religious tradition than to refugees from a minority religion. Since refugees usually lack the resources to create a well-endowed separate house of worship, refugees from majority religions choose to join established and well resourced churches for worship and bridging assistance. In contrast, refugees from a minority religion may encounter suspicion from the native-born population and need to create their own houses of worship or join fledgling religious institutions. At least initially, these religious institutions will have only a weak bridging function and serve more as places of worship that reinforce the idea of being an immigrant.

Data Analysis and Methodology

Reflecting the methodological choices of some of the researchers who have also studied immigrants and religion (Bankston and Zhou 2000; Chen 2006), I used participant observation and individual semi-structured interviews to gather data for this study. While the presence of an outsider probably has some effect on the behavior of populations of interest, the participant observation technique allows researchers to gain insights about individual and group dynamics within important community settings. I paired participant observation with semi-structured interviews since the languages and unfamiliar cultural traditions of refugees in Portland sometimes made participant observation difficult to interpret (Whyte 1984). Interviews allowed

me to investigate particular observations in more depth and gain the insights of those involved. The remainder of this section explains each of these methods in greater detail.

Given my interest in the role of religious institutions in the lives of refugees, I chose a local mosque dominated by Somalis and the Catholic Church with a large number of Sudanese in the congregation as sites for participant observation. I attended the mosque almost every Friday during the afternoon congregational prayer (*jumaa*) between January and June 2006. The *jumaa* prayer is comparable to the major religious service held on Sunday mornings in most Christian churches. Though I am not a Muslim, I listened to the sermon (*khutba*) first in Arabic and then in English and, with the blessing of the *imam*, participated in the group prayer ritual (*salat el jumaa*). After the prayer I socialized with the men who attended the mosque and the *imam*. I occasionally visited the mosque on weekends and weekdays at different times so that I could observe other events and activities.

I frequently attended the Sunday morning mass at the Catholic Church between November 2005 and June 2006, where I observed approximately 40 Sudanese refugees who were consistently part of a 400 person multi-ethnic majority white congregation. In addition to attending special Sudanese community events held at the church, including a baptismal party and a mass given by a visiting Sudanese priest, I also occasionally attended the church on Sunday afternoons to participate in a separate religious service for Sudanese refugees from the Azande tribe. Finally I visited another church, the Sudanese Community Church, to observe an inter-tribal, inter-denominational church service. Participating in these events allowed me to witness first hand how Somali and Sudanese refugees in Portland used religious institutions in their lives.

Individual interviews with a sample of Somali and Sudanese refugees enhanced my understanding of the roles of religious institutions in their lives. When choosing which refugees

to interview, I combined two sampling strategies. I snowball sampled from multiple entry points into the Somali and Sudanese refugee communities, including religious institutions, English language classes, and social service agencies. Snowball sampling increases access to hard to reach populations and individuals who are unlikely to respond positively to a “cold call” (Goldman 1961), but also potentially introduces sample bias into the study (King, Keohane and Verba 1994). To reduce this sample bias and ensure variation within the sample, I used a short screening questionnaire to sample purposively from potential interviewees generated from the snowball method (Spring et al. 2003; Trost 1986). I limited the sample of Sudanese refugees to individuals from the two most populous Sudanese tribes present in Portland (the Acholi and Azande tribes). Pilot interviews suggested that Somali refugees experienced discomfort when asked to identify their clan, so I removed this question from the questionnaire. As a result, I included fewer Somalis than Sudanese in the sample since I did not require variation in clan for Somali refugees in the study. This resulted in a sample of refugees that varied by country of origin (Somalia and the Sudan) and, within Sudanese refugees, by tribe (Acholi and Azande).

The screening interview revealed several important characteristics about the refugees. Table 9 compares characteristics of the population of adult Somali and Sudanese refugees who arrived in Portland between 1998 and 2004, to those in the sample that I interviewed. The Somali and Sudanese refugees I interviewed were older, more likely to be male, better educated, better English speakers, and had lived in Maine longer compared to the overall Somali and Sudanese refugee populations in Portland. The characteristics of the sample suggest that in comparison to all of the Somali and Sudanese refugees in Portland, the refugees I interviewed may have approached religious institutions with more sophistication.

Table 9: Descriptive statistics of the Somali and Sudanese adult refugee populations and sample

Country of origin	Somalia		Sudan	
	Population	Sample	Population	Sample
N	234	16	315	26
Average age in years	34.7	42.8	33.1	38.3
Percent male	58%	63%	58%	69%
Educational attainment				
High school or more	39%	63%	48%	54%
Less than high school	61%	37%	52%	46%
Not available	48	--	42	--
English fluency				
Fluent	22%	50%	31%	50%
Conversant	28%	25%	33%	46%
Need interpreter	50%	25%	36%	4%
Not available	58	--	62	--
Average number of months in ME	54.6	68.9	45.0	68.9

Note: Administrative data maintained by Catholic Charities Maine for adult refugees who arrived in Portland, ME between 1998 and 2004 and individual interviews by the author

The screening questionnaire also revealed some of the religious characteristics of the interview sample (Table 10). All of the Somalis interviewed self-identified as Muslim and worshipped at a mosque with a multi-ethnic congregation. Almost two-thirds of Somalis in the interview sample reported attending the mosque at least weekly. Most of the Somalis who reported that they attended the mosque less than weekly were female. In contrast to the Somalis, most of the Sudanese refugees in the sample were Catholic. Almost all of the Acholi interviewees reported worshipping at a multi-ethnic congregation and nearly two-thirds reported attending church at least weekly. Azande interviewees were more religiously active than their Acholi counter-parts: over 80 percent of the Azandes interviewed reported attending religious services in both ethnic and multi-ethnic congregations, and all of the Azandes reported attending a religious service at least weekly. Based on findings from previous research (Presser and Stinson 1998) and my own observations, I suspect that interviewees overstated their church and mosque attendance.

Table 10: Religious characteristics of the sample of Somali and Sudanese adult refugee interviewees

Country of origin	Somalia	Sudan	
Ethnicity/Tribe	Somali	Acholi	Azande
N	16	14	12
Religious affiliation			
Catholic	0%	71%	100%
Protestant	0%	29%	0%
Muslim	100%	0%	0%
Type of congregation			
Ethnic	0%	7%	8%
Multi-ethnic	100%	93%	8%
Ethnic and multi-ethnic	0%	0%	83%
Religious service attendance			
Weekly or more	63%	64%	100%
Less than weekly	37%	36%	0%

Note: Individual interviews by the author

When a potential interviewee passed the screening interview, I conducted a semi-structured interview with him or her that touched on multiple aspects of his or her resettlement and life in Portland. In this interview I asked refugees to describe their migration path to Portland; their daily routines; the level of cohesiveness they experienced in their co-ethnic community in Portland compared to back home; their employment experiences; and their social networks in Portland and how they used these social networks when seeking help. Additional questions focused specifically on their religious practices, social contacts they met at religious institutions, and the role of their religious institution in their personal lives and the life of their ethnic community.

All interviews took place between December 2005 and July 2006. Interviews lasted approximately one hour, but ranged from 30 minutes to three and one-half hours. Of the 42 interviews, I recorded 39 and transcribed them later to provide a written account of the interview. I used my research hypotheses to code the raw text of interview transcriptions and field notes

from my participant observation at religious institutions. Namely, I coded the functions of religious institutions according to whether they matched more closely the bonding or bridging definitions developed earlier in this paper.

Context of the Research

Understanding my participant observation experiences and interviews required placing them within the local context of Portland and the larger political context of conflicts in the Sudan and Somalia. Home to refugees from many countries in Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia, Portland, Maine has a tradition of refugee resettlement that began in the early 1980s. Today, refugees represent almost half of the recently arrived foreign-born population in Portland (Singer and Wilson 2006). My own calculations of data from Catholic Charities Maine, the only active refugee resettlement organization in Maine, reveal that about 1,100 adult refugees arrived in Portland between 1998 and 2004. During this period, Portland received a higher proportion of African refugees than the U.S. overall, 57 percent compared to 25 percent (ORR 2005). Most of the African refugees in Portland during this period came from Somalia or the Sudan.

Despite the presence of such a diverse refugee community, Portland remains racially and religiously homogenous. According to the 2005 American Community Survey, Portland has around 64,000 residents. Over 92 percent of these residents are native born and over 90 percent are white. Like many smaller cities in the U.S., Christian churches dominate Portland's religious landscape. Portland has approximately 30 Christian churches, compared to three synagogues and two mosques. Of the 30 Christian churches, seven are Catholic and the others are affiliated with various Protestant denominations. According to reports on the Portland Catholic Diocese website, the Diocese has an impressive operating budget (\$66 million in fiscal year 2006) and

oversees the operation of 21 primary and secondary Catholic schools in Maine, five of which are located in Portland. Clearly, refugees who resettle in Portland find a majority white, native-born and Christian population.

As a result of the civil wars that created the refugee crises in the Sudan and Somalia, refugees from these countries began to arrive in Portland in the mid-1990s. Sudan's most recent civil war (1983-2005) had two dimensions: Islamic Northern Sudan fighting against Christian and animist Southern Sudan, and infighting within the Southern Sudanese (Deng 1995). During the first dimension of the civil war Southern leaders recognized the unifying effect that Christianity could have when fighting against a Muslim army and supported the spread of Christianity throughout the South by encouraging and enabling religious conversions (Hutchinson 2001). The second dimension of the civil war occurred when tribal leaders in the Southern army turned on one another during a power struggle. Towards the end of the civil war, more Southern Sudanese had died because of infighting among Southerners than had died at the hands of the Sudanese government's army, resulting in significant mutual distrust between Southern Sudanese tribes (Jok and Hutchinson 1999). Refugees brought this distrust with them to Portland, resulting in a Sudanese refugee community fractured along tribal lines (Graves and Lado 2005).

In contrast to the conflict in the Sudan, religion played little, if any, role in the Somali civil war. Though some researchers suggest that race and class were major contributors to this conflict (Besteman 1996), most regard clan structure as the major level of social division within Somali society and the basis for the post-independence conflict that erupted in the country (Lewis 1988; Lyons and Samatar 1995). Somalis typically identify with one of six major clans and, based on centuries old antagonisms and affinities, view social, political, and economic

contexts through the lens of their clan. As some researchers put it, “the result is a society so integrated that its members regard one another as siblings, cousins, and kin, but also riven with clannish fission and factionalism, that political instability is the society’s normative characteristic” (Laitin and Samatar 1987, p. 31). As Somali urban areas became increasingly populous and important during the latter half of the 20th century, clan systems became the major mechanism for distributing political patronage, leading to an increased intensity of inter and intra-clan conflicts and eventual civil war. The resulting distrust among clans followed Somali refugees to Portland, dividing the Somali community by clan (Graves and Lado 2005).

Despite the divisions that Sudanese and Somali refugees brought with them to Portland, each group held the possibility of unification based on a shared religious tradition. Somali refugees had an even greater possibility of unification because in addition to sharing Islam they also shared a language and other cultural practices. Both groups arrived in Portland as racial and ethnic minorities, but Sudanese refugees shared a religious tradition with a substantial number of Christian native-born residents in Portland and had access to their established religious institutions. In contrast, Somali refugees were some of the first Muslims to ever live in Portland and had to create their own mosque. The lack of a mosque in Portland prior to the arrival of the Somalis is not unusual for small cities and towns in the U.S., as a recent survey of existing mosques in the U.S. revealed that only 20 percent of mosques in America were located in these settings (Bagby, Perl and Froehle 2001). As the next section shows, the interaction between the non-gateway context of Portland and religious tradition played a significant role in determining the function of religious institutions in the lives of these refugees.

Religious Institutions and Refugees in Portland

Overall, Sudanese refugees used the bridging and bonding functions of their church, while Somali refugees primarily used the bonding functions of their mosque in Portland. Stymied by differences in religious beliefs, a “Sudanese Community Church” failed to unify the entire Sudanese refugee community in Portland according to national origin. Instead, most Sudanese joined existing, multi-ethnic congregations, including a Catholic Church. One group of Sudanese also held a separate language service at the Catholic Church. Therefore, the Catholic Church had bonding and bridging functions for Sudanese refugees. With the resources of the Catholic Church at their disposal, attending this church provided Sudanese refugees with significant amounts of aid and influence in the Sudanese community and beyond. In contrast, the Somali mosque helped the Somali refugee community overcome serious clan divisions, providing an important national origin bonding function. However, as a homogeneous mosque isolated from other institutions in the community, it had a weak bridging function. Lacking any significant resources, the mosque provided Somalis with some aid and influence within the Somali community, but very little aid and influence in the wider community. In both the church and the mosque, a combination of religious principles, leadership practices and physical structure characteristics helped determine whether the institution served a bonding role, a bridging role, or both for refugees who attended them.

“From my grandmother until now we are Catholic, so I cannot change”

Despite the creation of a “Sudanese Community Church” in Portland in 2004 and examples of widespread participation by the Sudanese in special religious services at a Catholic Church, the Sudanese community had little success using religion as a unifying agent for the entire Sudanese community. The Sudanese Community Church met on Sunday afternoons in a

chapel borrowed from a Protestant Church. Instead of the usual organ and choir, members of the congregation had dual roles, playing drums and guitar and leading songs from a balcony at the rear of the chapel for some portions of the service and sitting in the pews and worshipping for other portions of the service. Even though the lay church leaders spoke in Arabic, a language many Southern Sudanese speak, and planned an inter-denominational service in hopes of attracting a large number and wide variety of Sudanese, less than 10 Sudanese attended the service during my visit. Interviews with Sudanese revealed that the church has struggled to attract a significant congregation except on special holidays, such as Easter and Christmas, when the service becomes more of a social event than a religious one. Sudanese interviewees visited the Sudanese Community Church on occasion, but only to socialize after they had attended their own religious service.

Though there are several reasons that could explain the failure of this church to attract a larger congregation and act as a bonding force for the entire Sudanese community, one of the most important is the desire by many Sudanese to strictly adhere to the practices of their specific religious tradition. As one Acholi man explained, “From my grandmother until now we are Catholic, so I cannot change.” At the Sudanese Community Church, religious practice differs significantly from a traditional Catholic mass. For example, the congregation stands for much of the service, singing loudly, clapping their hands, and dancing to loud drum music. The service includes elements common to many church services, such as readings from the Bible and a sermon, but for many Sudanese the attempt to incorporate common elements from multiple religious traditions into one service left them unsatisfied. As one Acholi man explained:

You can't have a church that has no route - I mean there is no church that is just a church, no! There should - I know everybody is talking about God and Jesus and the Bible, what they teaching in the Bible. But

different church interpret the Bible differently...I am baptized in the Catholic Church. I don't want to go to a Church where I don't know what they are teaching me.

Despite the potentially unifying effect of an interdenominational religious service conducted in Arabic, Sudanese refugees craved specific religious practices corresponding to their religious tradition and culture. As a result, they seldom attended the Sudanese Community Church in favor of other more familiar church settings.

On occasion, the Sudanese community did use a church as a gathering point for special religious services that aided Sudanese unity. One such occasion was a mass presided over by a visiting Sudanese priest at the Catholic Church, which drew over 300 Sudanese representing all of the tribes present in Portland and multiple religious traditions. In an attempt to be as inclusive as possible, the priest used English for the recitation of Catholic prayers and readings, but used a mixture of English and Arabic in the homily and other parts of the mass. In contrast to the lay minister who presided over the Sudanese Community Church service, the visiting priest was ordained and had the prestige associated with visiting Portland under the auspices of the Catholic Church in the Sudan. Had this priest lived permanently in Portland, the creation of a Sudanese-wide church that was part of the Catholic Diocese may have been a real possibility. However, without his continued presence, the religious diversity among the Sudanese in Portland made these types of Sudanese-wide bonding religious events rare.

Attendance of Sudanese at the Catholic Church in Portland

Most Sudanese refugees I interviewed attended the same Catholic Church in Portland. Though there are examples of Catholic refugees petitioning an Archdiocese for the creation of a separate immigrant church (Bankston and Zhou 2000), the Sudanese Catholics in Portland have

yet to make such a request. Instead, most Acholi and Azande refugees who went to the church attended the Sunday morning mass as a part of the multi-ethnic congregation. In addition to the Sunday morning mass, almost all of the Azande I interviewed also attended a Sunday afternoon Azande language service, held in a side chapel at the same Catholic Church and led by lay Azande community leaders.

Boasting a tall steeple and beautiful stained glass, the Catholic Church is an important symbol of the power and wealth of the Catholic Diocese in Portland. The beauty of the sanctuary and its prominence in the city helps to draw Sudanese refugees, who are accustomed to relatively plain Catholic Churches in Southern Sudan. For the Acholi and the Azande, the Catholic Church represents both a house of worship and a location to reconnect with other Sudanese. While the mass at the Catholic Church was always held in English and followed the progression of a traditional Roman Catholic mass, refugees from both tribes enjoyed the familiarity of the rituals and the chance to socialize with other Sudanese after the mass. Leadership in the church also played a large role in attracting Sudanese to the church. The rector at the church made a point of formally welcoming refugees to the mass and celebrating their attendance. For example, the following excerpt from the welcome message on the Catholic Church's website illustrates the commitment of the church to refugees, both past and present.

The [Catholic Church] has also been a Beacon of Light for refugees and immigrants who have landed on Maine's shores for the past 100 years, many of them from war-torn or discriminatory countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. Today we have over 21 different nationalities in the Parish, with 16 different languages spoken. Our [Catholic Church] School offers a Beacon of Learning to many of these refugee families and to other low-income families in this inner-city Parish.

In addition, the Catholic Church has a Multi-Cultural Advisory Council that encourages ethnic diversity in the church and formal participation in masses by refugees. This formal embrace of refugees matches the Catholic Church's commitment to serving the poor, as well as ensuring increased attendance at masses.

Despite this formal commitment by the church to refugees and diversity in general, there is little evidence that refugees interacted with native born parishioners in meaningful ways. As the following dialogue with one Acholi woman shows, making out-group friends at church was difficult because of the format of the mass and the abrupt exodus of native-born parishioners after the mass.

R: Sometimes, if I go to the church at 5 o'clock, I just go by myself and sit. Finish and go home.

I: Why don't you talk to anyone?

R: (laughter) Everybody, like, if they come to the church, after everything finished everybody they just leave.

I: Do Sudanese like to stay and talk?

R: Yeah, they always say hi to each other and talk a lot (laughter).

The lack of interaction between Sudanese and native born parishioners was also due, at least in part, to the physical design of the church. The Catholic Church does not have a flexible socializing space built into the main sanctuary. Instead the sanctuary's design enhances introspective prayer and focuses parishioners' attention on the altar at the front of the sanctuary where the priest conducts masses. Other rooms in the Catholic Church have the potential for more flexible uses that could promote socializing, but these rooms are largely unused on Sundays around the popular mass times when many people attend the church. After the

conclusion of mass, parishioners usually file out of the church doors into the parking lot and, during the warm summer months, some socializing occurs as people leave. However, for most of the year Maine's climate is relatively inhospitable, curtailing much of the socializing that might occur as parishioners find their cars. Without a coffee hour or some other kind of intentional social program scheduled before or after the Sunday morning mass, interaction between the Sudanese and native born parishioners relied on spontaneous socializing before or after masses that largely failed to occur. The physical design of the Catholic Church attracted Sudanese refugees to the church, but the inflexible spaces in the church did not promote the kind of mixing that promotes bridging between the refugee and native born parishioners.

"A Feast for the Children"

Though the Catholic Church was not a source of out-group social ties for the Acholi, it had an important function as a bridge between the Acholi and the wider Portland community. At an individual level, the church offered Acholi refugees access to its considerable institutional resources. For example, many Acholi families take advantage of scholarships to defray the expenses of sending their children to Catholic schools in Portland. At the tribal level, the Catholic Church acted as a bridge through its support of an Acholi organization called Action for Self-Reliance Association, which the Acholi abbreviate ASERELA. In 1994, Acholi refugees started ASERELA to raise money for refugees who lived in the Kiryandongo Refugee Camp in Uganda, where the first Acholi refugees in Portland had all spent time prior to coming to the U.S. Initially based on monthly contributions from the small number of Acholi in Portland, the group wired money back to the camp several times a year to help friends and relatives still living there. Within a year, after observing the fundraising power of a similar Rwandan refugee group who

held a benefit dinner, they partnered with a local human service organization and sponsored a fundraising dinner that raised several thousand dollars. They eventually switched partnerships to the Catholic Church to host the annual fundraising dinner, called “A Feast for the Children,” which is now standing room only and routinely raises \$10,000 or more each year. All of the proceeds from the dinner support a school that ASERELA built for children living in the Kiryandongo Camp.

Though the ingenuity and perseverance of the Acholi who started ASERELA deserve a considerable amount of credit, the Catholic Church has played an instrumental role in the success of ASERELA. Through the leadership of a priest who officiated over the masses at the Catholic Church during the mid-1990s, the church invested considerable resources into helping ASERELA succeed. In addition to hosting the annual dinner, the church contributes office space to ASERELA and helps the group tap into its large congregation and network of Christian churches for the annual dinner. Members of Protestant churches have also become involved on the board of directors for ASERELA and a local lawyer offers *pro bono* legal advice. Most of all, the involvement of the Catholic Church gives the goals of ASERELA a high level of legitimacy in the wider Portland community and makes the plight of the Sudanese refugees extremely visible. As a result, Acholi leaders in Portland benefit from their relationship to the Catholic Church through increased exposure to the wider Portland community. Finally, the relationship between ASERELA and the Catholic Church has a transnational component that benefits hundreds of children living in the Kiryandongo refugee camp, who receive access to a primary education and clean water in the school.

Ironically, the bridging function of the Catholic Church for Acholi refugees and the resulting success of ASERELA have contributed to increased tribal division among the Sudanese

in Portland. Sudanese refugees from other tribes fear that the Acholi will use their high profile in Portland to project themselves as spokespeople for the entire Sudanese refugee community. In addition, Sudanese refugees from other tribes worry that ASERELA only supports Acholi refugees. For example, when asked which Sudanese refugees in Portland actively participated in ASERELA, one Acholi man involved with the organization replied:

When the organization was first founded, it was founded by the Acholi people – the only [Sudanese] people here were Acholi people. So, when a lot of Sudanese start coming [to Portland], when we invited them, because we already have one specific project, which is the school, the camp where the school is put in, the majority of the people in that school, in that area, are Acholi. So people say, “My people are not benefiting from it, so I don’t want to contribute,” and stuff like that. So it tends to be mostly Acholi.

As a result, many refugees from other tribes have no interest in working with the Acholi on projects that could offer wider benefits to the Sudanese community. Instead, each tribe has created, or plans to create, a separate non-profit organization that focuses specifically on the needs of their tribal community in Portland.

“You cannot define yourself...if you don’t know where you are from”

In contrast to the primarily bridging function that the Catholic Church played for Acholi refugees, the Catholic Church had a bonding and bridging function for Azande refugees in Portland. Unlike the Acholi refugees, the Azande hold a separate language service every Sunday afternoon at an auxiliary chapel at the Catholic Church. This separate language service started in 2001 with the support of a priest at the Catholic Church (the same priest who invested the Church’s resources into ASERELA), but it is difficult to overstate the importance of three or four lay Azande community leaders who plan all of the services and make an enormous effort to bring

the Azande community together. The service routinely draws 40 of the estimated 160 Azande refugees in Portland and lasts for approximately one and a half hours. The format of the service resembles that of a traditional Roman Catholic mass, including the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, readings from the Bible and a homily delivered by a member of the congregation. The Azande service plays an important role in making religion more accessible to the Azande refugees, but it cannot replace the multi-ethnic Catholic mass since the Azande service does not include important Catholic sacraments. When asked whether she enjoyed the Azande service or the regular mass more, one Azande woman explained:

I would say the Azande service, because there is playing the bible [in Azande], I can hear it really. English too I know and understand, but not all of the words. Sometime I miss the word...[and] I don't know how to sing in English. I try, every Sunday, I try to go to sing, but some of them, they have [the same] songs in my language too. If they sing that song, I can sing in my language, it goes together. In church, in big church, they have whole communion, but for us we don't because we don't have priest can give us.

The characteristics of the Azande service reinforce Azande cultural traditions. First, the leaders conduct the entire service in the Azande language and, generally, only Azande refugees attend the service. Second, instead of a choir and organ, the entire Azande congregation serves as a choir; several musicians play drums and a large wooden xylophone called a *pbaningbo*; and the congregation dances while they sing. The Azande community purposely emphasizes the Azande language and traditions during their religious services as a way to preserve their culture. When asked why it was important to have a separate Azande service in addition to the regular Catholic mass, one Azande man explained:

Because if we broke it [our culture] down, our kids cannot know where we are from. The culture will not be there. The bible, they give it to us,

because Azande has his own bible. We don't like to eliminate it – our kids cannot know, because for long years, the culture will not be there. The pbaningbo – nobody is going to know it anymore. Because to make a culture, where are you going to bring the culture? Like Black America – they can't make a culture because it doesn't know where they came from. They came from Africa as slaves, but how will they create the culture to do it? There is nothing... You cannot define yourself and obtain your own language if you don't know where you are from.

Clearly anxious about repeating the experiences of African-Americans who lost their African roots when they arrived in the U.S. as slaves, the Azande use their religious service as an important bonding event for their community with a particular emphasis on instilling the Azande culture into their children.

In addition to the bonding function, the Azande refugees in Portland also used the Catholic Church as a bridge to help them assimilate into the mainstream culture and improve their lives. Like the Acholi, many Azande parents enrolled their children in Catholic schools. In addition, the Azande refugees periodically infused their religious practices into the regular Catholic mass at the Catholic Church. Largely because of the efforts of a new priest and the Multi-Cultural Advisory Council at the Catholic Church, Azande refugees played periodic, but prominent roles in the main Sunday morning mass. For example, on special occasions, the priest invited a group of Azandes to join the choir at the Catholic Church and perform traditional Azande songs for the entire multi-ethnic congregation. In addition, one of the Azande community leaders frequently performed readings during the regular Catholic mass on Sunday mornings. Together, these events have introduced new religious practices into the Catholic Church, and raised the profile of the Azande in the Catholic Church and among its congregation.

The more prominent bridging function of the Catholic Church for the Azande is the church's indirect support of the Azande Organization, a non-profit organization with a mission to

improve the lives of the Azande living in Portland. Again, leadership in the Catholic Church played an important role in supporting the Azande community's efforts to create the Azande Organization. Though the Catholic Church does not explicitly support the Azande Organization, a priest arranged for the Church to host the Azande church service where the Azande Organization was born. Azande community leaders developed the idea of an independent organization that operated under the same guiding principles and had the same goals as the Azande church service. Namely, the original mission statement of the Azande Organization emphasized the need to "foster fellowship" among the Azande in Portland, ensure the survival of Azande culture, and financially assist Azande community members in need.³

Recently, the organization has expanded its mission to include improving the socio-economic status of the Azande in Maine; addressing the cultural gap between Azande parents and their children; assisting in job training for Azande adults; and providing increased support for elderly Azande who need assistance with transportation, interpretation, and legal matters. Presumably, each of these goals has the potential to increase bridging for Azande refugees. For example, out-group social ties are often more helpful than co-ethnic ties in helping low income individuals find better jobs. In order to reduce the cultural gap between Azande parents and their children and assist elderly Azande, it is probably necessary to increase out-group contacts for Azande refugees so they can learn about American culture and how to access available resources. To date, a lack of substantial funding has hampered the effectiveness of the Azande Organization, but it has the potential to serve as an important bridge for the Azande into the mainstream in Portland.

³ From Azande Organization website (<http://www.azandeorganization.org/Mission.html>), accessed on May 16, 2007.

“Belonging to a clan is what holds you”

Similar to the tribal divisions that characterize the Sudanese refugee community in Portland, clan allegiances divide Somalis in Portland. In the words of one Somali man, “If you look at the whole picture, at the Somali psyche, [clan] is very, very important... belonging to a clan is what holds you.” In day-to-day life, clan differences do not disrupt friendships or exchanges of informal support among Somalis. In fact, in Portland there are many examples of strong friendships across clan lines and a willingness of a Somali from one clan to assist Somalis from other clans. Nonetheless, disputes between Somalis sometimes regress into charges of “clannist” attitudes. For example, Somalis refer to one of the local *halal* markets in Portland as “Somali BBC” or the “O’Reilly Show” because of the gossip spread there and the frequent arguments between men of different clans.

Clan allegiances divide the Somali community more systematically at the level of community organizations. The issue of clan tends to cause disputes and divisions among Somali community leaders, who disagree over whom should represent the Somali community in public discussions and control resources offered by city agencies and non-profits to assist Somalis. As a result, Somalis have started six different non-profit organizations since they arrived in Portland, with each organization corresponding to a different clan or sub-clan. While each organization publicly purports to represent all of the Somalis in Portland, none has achieved widespread support from Somalis of different clans. With only limited funds available from state and local governments and interested non-profits, and each Somali non-profit clamoring for its fair share, services provided by Somali-run institutions in Portland have been extremely limited. Frustrated with this lack of unity, one Somali man lamented:

We don't have a community [organization] that unites us together, we don't have an umbrella that we can come under. We are still very fragmented and it really, you know, frustrates, if I may say, our host community...Because they don't know who to talk to, they don't know which of us to go [to]...So they need that organizational system and things here [in the Somali community] are more laissez-faire (laughter). And sometimes it becomes very divisive. For example, this organization wants to help the refugees, or the Somalis, and they contact one [Somali] person, for example, and that person will say, "I will do this, I will help you." Somebody else will find out and he will go to that organization and he will say, "That person was nothing, we are the people you need to talk to!" (laughter)...That is when I dislike the clan system, when it becomes divisive; that is when it becomes a stumbling block to a much better thing.

Interviews with Somalis revealed how community leaders extend disagreements with other community leaders into the wider Somali community in Portland by manipulating Somalis from their clans to prevent them from extending their support to leaders from other clans. In the words of one Somali man, "Most people...they don't want their clan or their tribe to be the losing side. Every clan, they want to be the ones that win!"

"The first orientation that they [Somalis] get, they get it from the mosque"

In 2000, a group of Somali community leaders representing a cross-section of clans jointly created a Somali mosque in Portland. Unlike the interconnectedness of the Roman Catholic Church, mosques are independent entities and the creation of a new mosque does not depend upon the approval of a hierarchical religious authority (Leonard 2003). Though not all Somali community leaders participated and initial disagreements over where to place the mosque and how the mosque should operate initially plagued the initiative, its eventual success represents a notable departure from the normal divisiveness between rival Somali clans in Portland. As one Somali man explained:

This mosque, [it] was somebody else's idea, but we [my clan] supported [it] because we wanted somewhere to pray. Some of the other leaders, other clans, wanted to cause conflict because they thought, "This person was not agreeing with us, why we support him, whatever he is involved in now?" But, to me, it was personal because we need a place of worship; I didn't care whether they agreed or disagreed with each other.

In fact, my observations and interviews with Somalis revealed that the mosque is one of the few locations in Portland where Somalis gather without engaging in disputes over clan issues. Since the mosque has helped to overcome long running disputes between clans that many believe were at the heart of the conflict in Somalia, this suggests that the mosque has an important bonding function for the Somali community along national origin lines.

An important question is how the mosque achieved this bonding function for the Somali community, since antagonisms between clans run so deep and are not easily overcome. Tenets of Islam clearly play some role in this achievement. The widely held view among Muslims that Islam unites believers into one community called an *umma* suggests that sharing the Islamic faith creates a religious identity that trumps any other identity. The expression of this faith through prayer rituals that reinforce important Islamic traditions also have a hand in the bonding function of the mosque (Warner 1997).⁴ For example, a typical *jumaa* prayer on Friday afternoons drew between 50 and 60 men and no more than 10 women, representing multiple clans. As in all mosques, men removed their shoes prior to walking into the main prayer room of the mosque. Many also performed a cleansing ritual called *wudu* that involves washing the hands, arms and feet prior to the prayer. After entering the prayer room, men performed a set of individual prayers, and then sat on the carpet, either waiting quietly for the arrival of the *imam* or reading from the *Qur'an*. A call to prayer over a portable public address system signaled the start of

⁴ Because men and women worship in separate rooms at this mosque, all of my observations relate only to men at the mosque.

jumaa. One of the three *imams* who volunteer their services at the mosque gave a sermon, or *khutba*, in Arabic and then in Somali or English before leading the group in *salat el jumaa*. Many Somali interviewees believed that Somali culture and Islam are so thoroughly intertwined that practicing Islamic rituals also reinforces what it means to be Somali.

The leadership of *imams* also helps to explain the power of the mosque in bringing Somalis from different clans together. For example, in one of his *khutbas*, one *imam* highlighted the following passage from the *Qur'an* (verse 103 from *Surah 3, Al-'Imran*):

And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favor on you; for you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, you became brethren; and you were on the brink of the Pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes His Signs clear to you: that you may be guided.

Despite this powerful message from the *Qur'an* and appeals for broader unity among Somalis by an *imam* at the mosque, the unity on display at the mosque does not appear to extend beyond its doors. For example, the imam who delivered the *khutba* mentioned above admitted that forging an identity that trumped clan identification was still a problem in Portland. In his words:

Saying is one thing and doing is another. So, you cannot just stand there and deliver a sermon. You have to do some footwork, you have to call people, bring them, and do it in a practical way. But people about the sermon just say, "Ah, we used to hear this all the time; why is it any different now?" People can sense the problems on the ground and only a sense of community, a sense of togetherness, will help. At the same time, it seems that nobody knows how to go about that. Or if somebody knows how to go about that, there are counter-forces that if you want to head this way, they just want to spin and they will say, "He is from that clan, so he is just doing that for certain people." And all the people don't think critically, so they will just back up and you will end up alone.

The *imam* went on to describe a social landscape in the Somali community lacking the kind of leadership necessary to overcome clan divisions outside of the mosque.

The physical design of the mosque also plays some role in allowing the mosque to play a bonding function in the Somali community. In contrast to the Catholic Church, where parishioners do not have a natural socializing space, the area where Muslims attending the mosque leave their shoes serves as an important socializing space for Somalis. When men reclaim their shoes in the hallway outside of the mosque's prayer room they commonly exchange greetings, but also important information about jobs and housing. Since the mosque lacks pews like the Catholic Church, the main prayer room is completely open and Somalis who attend the mosque have the freedom to use the space as they see fit during non-prayer times. For example, I conducted several interviews at the mosque and noticed other Somalis using the space for informal meetings as well. On the other hand, the nondescript exterior of the mosque and lack of a clear sign identifying the mosque made it unknown to most non-Muslims, discouraging potential converts or other curious Portland residents from investigating the space or learning more about the religion. As a result the physical design of the mosque aided its bonding function by encouraging socializing among Somalis, but limited the interest of non-Muslims in the space.

The homogeneity of the mosque also encourages its bonding function. Few non-Somali Muslims live in Portland and my observations suggest that over 90 percent of mosque attendees are Somali. This homogeneity reduces the ethnic and nationalistic tensions sometimes found in immigrant-dominated mosques that can sometimes work against the bonding power of Islam (Badr 2000; McCloud 2006, p. 6). At the same time, according to interviews with some Somalis who have significant experience in Muslim countries other than Somalia, the dominance of Somalis in the mosque allows the *imams* to interpret parts of the *Qur'an* and organize prayers

from a uniquely Somali perspective. In one case, a Somali woman believed that an imam deliberately misinterpreted the *Qur'an* in his *khutba*, infusing it with his own opinions instead of a more accurate interpretation. In her words:

They [*imams*] impose a lot of wrong opinions when they are giving speeches. A couple of times I was there and I was really turned off because I am fluent in Arabic and I've finished the *Qur'an* many times. He was translating it completely wrong – adding things to it and deleting things. So that bothered me a lot.

Since it is so effective at bringing Somalis in Portland together, it is an important starting point for building social networks and stature for Somalis. When Somalis first arrive in Portland, they frequently make the mosque one of their first stops in order to connect with the Muslim community and look for friends or acquaintances living there. As one Somali man explained, “the first orientation that they [Somalis] get, they get it from the mosque.” In addition, some Somali males may frequent the mosque to improve their stature within the Somali community. In the words of one Somali woman, “The more you hang around at the mosque, the more authority you will have. People will look to your suggestions. They will say, ‘Oh, he’s a sheik!’ Even though they haven’t had any theology background.”

Some of the activity at the mosque focuses on social control for Somali youth and teaching young Somalis about their Somali and Islamic heritage. On one occasion, after complaints by staff at the local public library about improper behavior by Somali high school students, the imam and other Somali elders addressed teenagers directly, imploring them to correct their behavior. During the weekends, the mosque becomes a hub of social activity for young Somalis. On Saturdays and Sundays, elders who are fluent in Arabic volunteer at the mosque to lead classes in the *Qur'an* for young male and female Somali children. This helps

young Somalis with their religious training and gets them closer to fulfilling an important goal for Muslims to memorize and recite the entire *Qur'an* in Arabic. The Portland mosque has followed the lead of many other North American mosques, since hosting these types of classes represents a significant shift from the traditional role of a mosque as a convenient place to pray to its new role in the U.S. as an education and community center (Waugh 1994).

With the exception of young female Somalis involved in learning Arabic and the *Qur'an*, the mosque does not have an important bonding function for Somali women. While men attend mosques more frequently than women in many Islamic cultures and in most American mosques (Bagby, Perl and Froehle 2001; Kohut and Logo 2007), the extreme overrepresentation of Somali men at the mosque in Portland is unusual. As one Somali woman explained:

You usually find more men at the mosque, no matter where you are. But usually, in Muslim countries on Fridays, you see both genders. But here, I think most of the Somali women here are working very hard, raising children – a lot of single-mother homes. They are overburdened. Even the ones who do have husbands, or men in their lives, they are not getting any help from them. Financially or with the children. They don't have time to socialize like the men do.

In interviews, women who did go to the mosque normally limited their involvement to dropping off and picking up their kids from Arabic lessons. Despite many examples of the bonding function that the mosque has for Somalis in Portland, male Somalis tend to benefit from this bonding more than female Somalis.

The mosque does not have a significant bridging function for the Somali community in Portland. Though Somali interviewees mentioned making friends at the mosque, these friends were rarely from countries other than Somalia. Friends from the mosque provided informal support to Somalis on occasion, but, with some exceptions, this support did little to help Somalis

get ahead. The exceptions are limited to assistance that came from the few Somalis with positions in human service agencies and a native-born convert to Islam who assisted many Somalis as they attempted to navigate bureaucracies in the local government or human service non-profit organizations. There were so few individuals at the mosque able to assist other Somalis, that they could not provide nearly enough support to meet the needs of the community.

In stark contrast to the significant resources available to Sudanese refugees at the Catholic Church, Somalis found little institutional support at the mosque. Unlike the large collections that I observed at the Catholic Church on Sunday mornings, donated by the majority native-born congregation, collections at the mosque drew little financial support since the majority of those in attendance were refugees and could not afford to donate significant amounts of money to the mosque. In fact, a recent report released by the Maine Department of Labor revealed that typical Somali refugee workers in Portland earned less than \$13,000 in their most recent year of work (Allen 2006). Unlike many American mosques that have significant numbers of highly educated and relatively wealthy South Asians (Leonard 2003), the Somali congregation at the Portland mosque could not afford to contribute much to the mosque.

Though I do not know the exact budget of the mosque, its shabby appearance and modest size suggest that the budget is very small. The mosque has two prayer rooms (one for men and one for women), a bathroom, and a small office space with a telephone and a donated personal computer. This office is locked most of the time and used mainly by the *imams* and other mosque leaders during the weekends. Aside from classes on the *Qur'an* and Arabic, the mosque does not offer institutionalized forms of support, such as English or job training classes observed in mosques in gateway contexts (Badr 2000). Finally, the mosque remains isolated from other community institutions in Portland and the *imams* do not act as spokespeople for the Somali

community. Instead, leadership in the Somali community has a secular face, represented by the variety of contentious Somali-run non-profit organizations. So, despite multiple examples of the important bonding function played by the mosque, its bridging function is largely absent for Somali refugees in Portland beyond the national origin group.

Discussion

When they arrived in Portland, Catholic Sudanese refugees from the Acholi and Azande tribes joined a well established, majority religious tradition at a well-endowed church. Lacking an ordained Sudanese priest in Portland and the necessary resources, neither the Acholi nor the Azande tribes attempted to create a Catholic ethnic congregation separate from the existing Catholic infrastructure. Instead, both groups maintained strong ties to the multi-ethnic congregation and, in unique ways, used their relationship to the Church and its considerable assets as a bridge to assist them in their lives in Portland. In addition to this bridging function, the Azande tribe created an Azande language service within the Catholic Church that also provided an important bonding function for them. The inflexible physical design of the sanctuary reduced interaction between Sudanese refugees and native born parishioners. However, leadership from clergy and lay Sudanese community leaders, and the message of inclusiveness that guides much of the Catholic Church's work encouraged its bridging and bonding functions for Sudanese refugees. Thus the Acholi and Azande tribes showed considerable flexibility in how they used the Catholic Church in Portland, taking advantage of bridging and bonding functions offered by the Church, though it is unclear from this research why they chose to use the Catholic Church in different ways.

On the other hand, Somali refugees lacked a vibrant Islamic infrastructure in Portland to match the Catholic infrastructure found by the Sudanese. While they had few resources necessary to develop a strong mosque in Portland, the non-hierarchical nature of Islam allowed Somalis to create an independent mosque. The programmable space within the mosque, strong message of unity within Islam, and leadership among an imam active in the mosque activities all helped promote the bonding role of the mosque in the Somali community. With few non-Somali Muslims living in Portland, Somalis dominated the mosque and used its bonding function to preserve Somali cultural traditions and overcome, at least in one facet of life in Portland, serious clan divisions within the Somali community. For the most part, male Somalis benefited from the bonding function of the mosque more than female Somalis. However, the homogeneity of the mosque, its isolation from other institutions in the community, and its lack of resources limited its bridging function for Somali refugees beyond the national origin group.

These research findings suggest that the interaction between context and religious tradition has an important effect on the role of religious institutions for immigrants. However, the findings do not support any of the research hypotheses suggested earlier in this paper. Instead, in non-gateway areas, religious institutions have primarily a bonding function for immigrants from a minority religious tradition, but bonding and bridging functions for immigrants from a majority religious tradition. The bonding function can be particularly pronounced for immigrants from minority religious traditions who use religious institutions as sanctuaries from a society they see as threatening and antithetical to their value system (Mattson 2003). Findings from this study indicate it is not uncommon for immigrants from a minority religious tradition to create and support their own religious institutions after they arrive in non-gateway areas, though no data exist that could reveal the pervasiveness of this trend.

The types of resources available at minority religious institutions vary directly with the relative wealth of the immigrants who created and support it. For immigrants with few resources, like refugees, this means that their religious institutions are unlikely to offer a wide range of resources, limiting their bridging capacity. In contrast, immigrants from majority religious traditions may find a more welcoming environment in non-gateway areas. If these immigrants lack sufficient funds to create their own religious institutions, they can join established and well-resourced religious institutions already in place. In fact, these established institutions could play a significant bridging role in the lives of immigrants, while leaving open the possibility of using the institution for bonding purposes as well.

These research findings challenge the prevailing view that religious institutions play simultaneous bonding and bridging roles in the lives of immigrants (Bankston and Zhou 2000). Its major theoretical contribution is to point out the importance of the interaction between context, and the socio-economic status and religious affiliation of immigrants in helping to determine the role of religious institutions in their lives. In non-gateway contexts, poor immigrants like refugees from minority religious traditions usually do not have access to, nor can they afford to create, thriving religious institutions that provide a bridging function and the access to important aid and influence that usually accompanies this bridging function. Therefore, compared to immigrants in non-gateway contexts who are part of majority religious traditions, immigrants from minority religious traditions may not receive important advantages from their religious institutions that help them adapt to their new homes. This could have the effect of reinforcing views among the native born public and some academics that immigrants from minority religious traditions will never adopt American culture (Huntington 1996; Wuthnow 2005). The reinforcement of this view is particularly problematic in non-gateway

areas, where research shows public opinion is least supportive of immigrants anyway (De Jong and Tran 2001).

Clearly, the qualitative nature of this research limits the extent to which its findings are generalizable. Of particular concern is the possibly icy reception that native born residents in Portland gave to Muslim refugees because of their religion and how this reception affected the study's results. For example, it is possible that immigrants who are part of Hindu or Buddhist religious traditions, which seem more palatable to Americans, would have had more success using the bridging function of their religious institutions compared to the Muslims included in this study. In addition, non-refugee Muslims from South Asia and various countries in the Middle East may have more resources to invest in their mosques, resulting in religious institutions with substantially greater bridging capabilities than those found at the mosque in this study. With these limitations in mind, these findings are suggestive and further research should examine the role of religious institutions in the lives of different types of immigrants from other minority and majority religious traditions in non-gateway locations. Researchers should pay particular attention to why refugees from the same country and religious tradition sometimes choose to use their religious institutions in different ways.

On a more practical level, policy makers and social service providers should think more critically about what needs go unmet for immigrants from minority religious traditions in non-gateway areas. Service providers should take steps to reduce the potential isolation of minority religious institutions in non-gateway contexts through the establishment of inter-faith dialogues and initiatives designed to encourage interaction between minority religious institutions and majority religious institutions. These types of initiatives serve a two-fold purpose. First, they reduce ignorance among the native-born population about the new minority religious traditions

now present in their community and encourage socializing between the two groups. Second, the mixing legitimizes representatives of the minority religious institutions and exposes them to potential partnerships and funding opportunities that can support the services it provides or would like to provide. With increased attention to bringing the congregations of minority religious institutions into the civic community in non-gateway areas, immigrants from minority religious traditions stand a better chance of receiving important services that can help them adjust to life in their new homes.

In immigrant groups where secular leadership is contested, such as the Somali community in Portland, working with representatives of religious institutions may be an effective way for service providers to receive balanced input from the community and distribute needed resources. On the other hand, it is unclear what effect recognizing the mosque and its leaders as the legitimate voice of the divided Somali community would have on the mosque's bonding function. For example, the mosque in Portland may be effective at bringing Somalis from different clans together precisely because it has so few resources for competing clans in the community to fight over. An infusion of power, via the public recognition of mosque leaders as spokespeople for the Somali community, and the funds likely to follow such recognition could result in increased infighting among community members and a serious strain on the bonding power of the mosque. Ultimately this strain could cause ruptures in the mosque, resulting in an institution that fills neither a bonding nor a bridging role for Somalis. Therefore, in heavily divided communities, it may be more effective to use a religious institution as a central location for a campaign that educates community members about the services already available to them.

Appendix A: Results of the Probit Analysis

There were two dependent variables in the probit analysis. **Work_First** is a dichotomous variable coded 1 if a refugee had earnings from employment in his first year of work in Maine and 0 otherwise. **Work_Recent** is another dichotomous variable coded 1 if a refugee had earnings from employment in his most recent year of work in Maine and 0 otherwise. The probit equations used five variables to estimate whether or not a refugee worked in Maine:

- **Age:** Age reflects life experience and should have a positive effect on working in Maine.
- **Age_Sq:** Age-squared should have a negative effect on working in Maine.
- **Cohort:** a set of dummy variables used to control for year of arrival in Portland (1998-2004, 1998 was dropped). Refugees who arrived in earlier cohorts should be more likely to work in Maine than refugees who arrive in later cohorts.
- **Relation:** a dichotomous variable coded 1 if the refugee was the principal applicant in the refugee resettlement process and 0 otherwise. The principal applicant in the refugee resettlement process was the person from a household who worked most closely with the resettlement bureaucracy. Refugees who are the primary applicants in the resettlement process may face more pressure to provide financially. Therefore, primary applicant status should have a positive effect on working in Maine.
- **Family_Size:** the total number of individuals who arrived with a refugee in Portland (including the refugee). It should have a negative effect on working in Maine reflecting higher child care costs associated with working.

Table A.1: Probit analysis for the probability of female refugees working in Portland, Maine (Work_First)
(Dependent variable = 1 if person experienced employment and 0 otherwise)

	Maximum Likelihood Estimates	z-statistic
Intercept	-1.3388	-2.0011
Age	0.1601	4.4794
Age_sq	-0.0021	-4.7960
Cohort.1999	-0.6404	-2.7064
Cohort.2000	-0.2059	-0.7829
Cohort.2001	-0.8164	-3.3083
Cohort.2002	-1.1052	-3.7030
Cohort.2003	-0.6465	-2.0924
Cohort.2004	-2.4133	-7.0886
Relation	-0.2781	-1.7746
Family_Size	-0.0547	-0.9230

Chi2(10) = 117.07

412 Observations (143=0; 269=1)

Table A.2: Probit analysis for the probability of male refugees working in Portland, Maine (Work_First)
(Dependent variable = 1 if person experienced employment and 0 otherwise)

	Maximum Likelihood Estimates	z-statistic
Intercept	-0.8095	-1.3744
Age	0.1102	3.5116
Age_sq	-0.0014	-3.7600
Cohort.1999	-0.6773	-3.0635
Cohort.2000	-0.3094	-1.3610
Cohort.2001	-0.4966	-2.166
Cohort.2002	-0.2900	-1.0709
Cohort.2003	-0.3747	-1.266
Cohort.2004	-1.6316	-5.9068
Relation	-0.3529	-2.0932
Family_Size	0.1460	2.6395

Chi2 (10) = 73.90

526 Observations (131=0; 395=1)

Table A.3: Probit analysis for the probability of female refugees working in Portland, Maine (Work_Recent)
(Dependent variable = 1 if person experienced employment and 0 otherwise)

	Maximum Likelihood Estimates	z-statistic
Intercept	-0.9005	-1.3431
Age	0.1396	3.9568
Age_sq	-0.0018	-4.3198
Cohort.1999	-0.7786	-3.1924
Cohort.2000	-0.3577	-1.3382
Cohort.2001	-0.9054	-3.5742
Cohort.2002	-1.2108	-3.9961
Cohort.2003	-0.6855	-2.1504
Cohort.2004	-2.5525	-7.4109
Relation	-0.2577	-1.6450
Family_Size	-0.0316	-0.5088

Chi2(10) = 116.62

412 Observations (139=0; 273=1)

Table A.4: Probit analysis for the probability of male refugees working in Portland, Maine (Work_Recent)
(Dependent variable = 1 if person experienced employment and 0 otherwise)

	Maximum Likelihood Estimates	z-statistic
Intercept	-0.3219	-0.5297
Age	0.0930	2.8756
Age_sq	-0.0012	-3.1782
Cohort.1999	-0.6837	-2.9487
Cohort.2000	-0.3024	-1.2611
Cohort.2001	-0.6051	-2.5352
Cohort.2002	-0.4069	-1.4654
Cohort.2003	-0.4139	-1.3518
Cohort.2004	-1.7558	-6.1680
Relation	-0.4018	-2.2190
Family_Size	0.1508	2.5300

Chi2(10) = 77.17

526 Observations (120=0; 406=1)

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